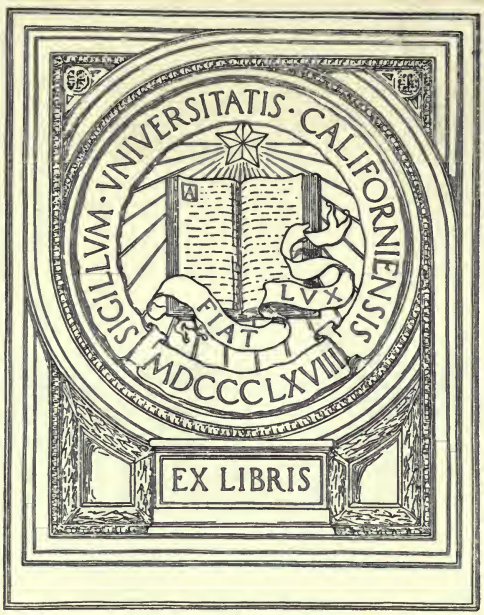
NIMROD'S WIFE

By

GRACE GALLATIN SETON



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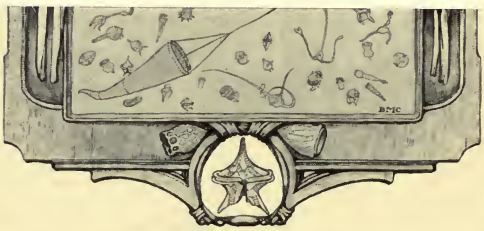

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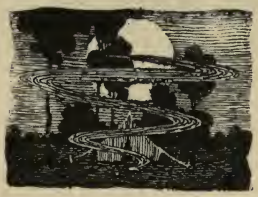
Nimrod's Wife

By

GRACE GALLATIN SETON, 1872-
Author of "A Woman Tenderfoot"

Pictures by
WALTER KING STONE
and
ERNEST THOMPSON SETON



LONDON
Archibald, Constable & Company
1907

-3904-204

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TO ONE

Who, without strength, makes slaves of the strong;
Who, loving none, is loved by all—

THE BABY

NOTE TO THE READER

The events herein recorded really happened, although some latitude has been taken as to time and place; and one experience may seem to follow fast upon another, because, necessarily, the best of all has been omitted—the glorious succession of *eventless* days when one was content to be alive and carefree.

G. G. S.

Cos Cob, Conn., 1907

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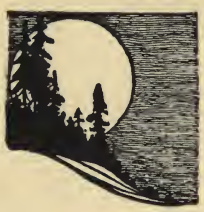
PART I.

IN THE SIERRA

I.

"THE INN OF THE SILVER MOON"

WERE you ever in the open air through all the rounded day with not so much as a strip of canvas between you and the great space above? Have you ever watched that space put forth its round of blue—from palest grey at early morn—chill as Ophelia's brook-kissed tresses, to warmer—as the dove is grey, like the passion of anæmic youth, to steel—glittering as the mercenary eye, to drab—a brooding menace, to slate—even as Othello's sombre



mien — a certainty of breaking storm?

Or, have you ever watched its gayer nature from that same chill tone at dawn peep forth, little spots of blue, like childish laughter dispelling sterner mood, until the whole wide dome is smiling—the blue of the asteria; warmer yet as the sun mounts—to turquoise, and at last the true cerulean, shimmering, blazing in all the ripe completed beauty of a June garden? Then have you, as the hours circled, watched this full-blooded light yield its radiance to the spirit of evening, gently drifting to the blue of the ancients, lapis lazuli—deeper, deeper yet, until the whole wonderful mantle is spread over you, a great dark-hearted sapphire? Then, indeed you have found something good.

I am not asking you, the veteran, scarred with wounds and memories, nor you, the free-spirited mountaineer or plainsman; but you house-ridden dwellers in the cities, soul-sick ones, in church, in drawing-room, in office, or sweat-shop. Throw off your fetters for awhile, your

prejudice, your narrow-mindedness, all the petty things that make your daily trappings and take a sun-bath with me, give your starved soul a chance—the road to the outdoors is open to all. And as Providence is apparently over-busy administering to every feeble soul the necessary, properly-mixed tonic of self-sacrifice and recompense, come with me back to the woods, pry open your blind eyes and grow as the flowers grow.

A STRONG breeze was stirring the tree-tops, the shining blue-eyed water of Lake Tahoe danced happily in its mountain home. The largest, fattest trout found shelter there, lucky the human who could float and dive with them. He might feel he was descended from the mer-folk, the sea his natural habitat, so buoyant is it, so deep, so bracing, so everything a water should be.

At least Nimrod said it was all these things, said it at great length as he stood, fully dressed, with no

suspicious dampness to be discerned upon his locks, and flung chips to Undine, who rejoiced audibly while bringing them to shore. Undine was a black mongrel, a drifter in the high country, like ourselves. She had served many masters, cattlemen, even sheepmen, but the only law she permanently obeyed was that of the wild. She had attached herself to our cavalcade under circumstances unexpected as they were praiseworthy. But first it seems best to record that my "Yes" accompanied as it was by a variety of exclamation and interrogation points, caused Nimrod to say with a trace of haste in his manner:

"Look at Silverton ——"

And I did look at Silverton playing tag in the water with Undine, whose tail must have fairly loosened at the joints with joy.

Silverton was good to look at, six feet two; he was equally good to be with. He is dead now, poor chap, so I can say all the nice things about him that occur to me. Lou Silverton was the mountain type in its highest expression, a big man

morally as well as physically, herculean strength at anybody's service (I have seen him break a big pebble in his hands), his never-failing good humour, his homely philosophy and woodcraft lore made him the man of all others to go camping with. It was largely his courage and endurance that had made it possible to bring Monarch the biggest grizzly ever captured alive, to the Zoo at Golden Gate.

Whether my derision had urged him on, or whether his own remarks were a precursor to his present plan, I know not, but Nimrod disappeared behind some bushes and soon was splashing right merrily. How I envied them. My prim inheritance forbade that a towel should serve as a bathing garment. To my undoing, memory now presented a picture printed there only the day before when on the march; a jolly cascade of purest mountain vintage had scooped out in its eager course a granite slab, great boulders were piled about it. Here was a bath-tub smooth, unscarred by crack or pebble, a bath-tub for Susanne to envy.

It was not more than three miles. Surely I could find it. Leaving these brazen men with their brazen dog to take their shameless bath, wrapped in a cloak of modesty and sweet anticipations, I jumped upon the ever-ready horse, and trying to pretend that I was accustomed to going through these great solemn woods alone I started for the reality of that ablutionary picture. When at last it was found, the sun had already begun to pull down his shades, the pool, perhaps eight feet across and waist deep, looked black and cold—brrrrh! very cold. No, decidedly, Susanne would never have risked her satin flesh. As I hesitated the pines above sighed loudly:

"We love the pool so deep and cool,
It is our child.
Step boldly in, dare all to win,
'T will then be mild."

After that, the only polite thing to do was to become acquainted in the manner outlined. Unfortunately, wet rock is often like good intentions, most slippery. Not unaware of this I selected the least

A BATH TUB FOR SUZANNE TO ENVY

sloping approach; a chilly wind swept by and through my Eve's costume most unpleasantly, when bump, bang-splash! I had slid full length, face downward into the water.

O mournful deceivers above—are you the unwilling servants of the monster my affrighted eyes now gazed upon? Life may hold worse moments, I pray not. What fiend had dashed me into that icy water to disturb, in frantic struggles for the life-giving air, the owner of this pool —a water-snake with darting tongue in a flattened head. It was not courage but sheer fright that tightened my hold on the rock rim near his writhing tail. There seemed yards of the squirming horror; in fact it filled the universe. It seemed to be enveloping me in swirling waves, as the dragon of the pool gradually glided under the rock. Then suddenly again the pines sang:

" . . . . . dare all to win. "

I let go and managed to scramble out of the water, a frozen rag.

It had been such a delightful bath!

Fortunately Nimrod had hunted me up and my courage being as absent as the chill was present, soon supplied some of the Dutch variety—such siren pines, yet do I love you.

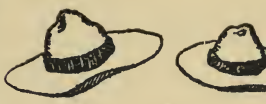
Having revived the perishing, Nimrod, after the manner of husbands, proceeded to investigate. How long was the snake, how marked, what shaped head?

"Humph! *Pituophis catenifer*, a harmless Bull-snake! Doubtless more scared than you." -*Could* you have forgiven him? Later Silverton's philosophy smoothed my ruffled feelings.

"Why do you suppose I am such a coward? Surely you have never been afraid in your life, have you?"

"Yes," a courteous lie, "but being afraid does not mean a coward. That's imagination. You see, I haven't much. It's what one *does* that counts. A fellar's feelings are his own job. I'll bet you've got more of the real article than I have. You get in a tight place, you hate it, but get out. Now I get in a tight place—I just get out—no frills—no credit."

He took off his sombrero, a huge



affair with a plain leather band on the crown, and held it beside mine. It was like his but much smaller and the wide leather band was beautifully carved, a Mexican silver buckle held it.

"That's the difference—frills. It's just as useful."

We had been out in the Sierra for two weeks. There was one more of us, the cook. There ought to have been three more of us, for Sally and her husband were coming, but one of the children got the measles. Unless some other germs triumph, they will join us next month in Idaho. Sally's real name is Gulielma. She could not help it. There has always been one in the family. Her grandmother's name was Gulielma Mary Ann Sprigett Penn Wells Dean, so she got off with G. D. Rockingham, and now she is—you know—Tevis. So Bobby Tevis calls her "Pet," or "Petty," and I call her Sally. She does not care. She is hardened, she even looks with sweet unflinching eyes when her old-fashioned mother, going back to first principles, says, "Gu-li-el-ma!"

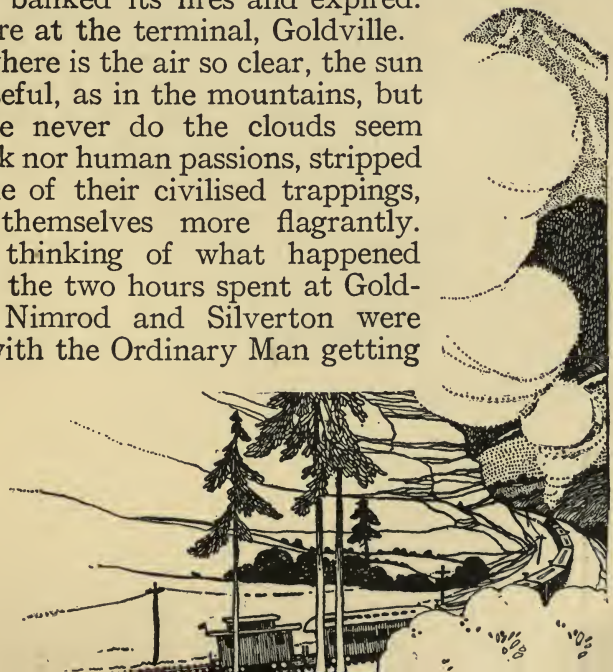
I have never camped with a woman, but Bobbie Tevis has felt the call of the Red Gods and Sally has to come. She is very wise in the matter of husband keeping, is Sally. I have never seen her equal. Bobbie does everything for her, and adores her, and is not happy unless she is enjoying with him the same thing at the same moment. She has practically made herself over, perhaps a trifle strenuous for most, but it is beautiful to behold.

As for the cook, he was just an Ordinary Man who owned four horses and a wagon and some saddle horses, lived in Goldville, the place we wanted to start from—and could bake bread.

But to begin at the beginning: We left Sacramento, a light hearted trio, on the "mixed." At last we were started after much buying of provisions and camp necessaries. Perhaps you have never made the acquaintance of a "mixed"? This one had a moribund day coach very much frayed and moth-eaten in the matter of velvet seats, and very feeble in the springs; we seemed to be riding

chiefly on the trucks. Being the one daily train we had a caboose behind, and the rest of us was freight. With frequent stops for breath or water, the engine puffed, puffed up hill at least ten miles an hour. But no matter, for the iron horse toiled through a vast orchard and when it gave a long wheezing hiss and put on brakes to rest, merrily Silverton jumped off and foraged for the ripest figs and Nimrod for the rosiest peaches, until gorged with the best of California's cornucopia, we were glad to leave the fruit belt, puffing, blowing and bumping our way toward the Sierra, calm "sentinels of the sky." Once among them the engine banked its fires and expired. We were at the terminal, Goldville.

Nowhere is the air so clear, the sun so grateful, as in the mountains, but likewise never do the clouds seem so black nor human passions, stripped of some of their civilised trappings, show themselves more flagrantly. I am thinking of what happened during the two hours spent at Goldville. Nimrod and Silverton were busy with the Ordinary Man getting



ready for the start that very afternoon into the mountains—we were to have no more roofs for a glorious while.

Being unoccupied, I drifted down the main street and into a little park surrounding the Court House. Several children and dogs were playing; on the benches were a few loafers and some women from the country with baskets—a long line beyond of dusty vehicles with horses hitched testified that it was market day. Selecting a vacant and shaded bench I sat thereon and extracting a tiny volume of verse from the crown of my hat began to read—I have no idea how long.

"—— Fair lilies, roses red,
That once above my head
Waved in a wealth of soft caressing splendour ——"

"Miss, did you ever see a *dead* man?" Shot into my ear like an arrow. Someone had whispered it sibilantly. My slow astonished gaze, thus torn from the contemplation of youth, love and beauty, saw beside me a small woman in shabby black,

her eyes straight ahead, looking at something within, her hands clasped tightly in her lap. How had she got there?

"He's dead. I never saw one. He's there *now*."

She shot a sidelong glance at me. "Where?"

"Over there," giving her right shoulder a hitch in the direction of Main Street.

"Wouldn't you like to see him?" She questioned in the same suppressed tone. Most assuredly I would not, but before I could say so she went on.

"They took him there this morning. He shot hisself yesterday. He lived next ranch—and I—want to see him. I can't go alone. Been trying to——. Now *will* you come?" She had risen and for a moment an eager look chased away the strained one.

"Why did he——" She interrupted me.

"He's a widower. She's gone about a year. His step-daughter kept house for him, and folks say—well she's come to no good end, and

he's shot hisself because folks said—but he and I—we— Ain't you comin'? The old Man 'll be startin' back soon." She glanced at the long line of market wagons beyond the square.

"*Comin'*?"

"Very well."

I had much to do to keep pace with her. Once having gotten me, her moral force, started, she travelled swiftly out of the park, down Main Street, turned at the third block and halted abruptly in front of "there," which proved to be an "Undertaking Parlour."

"I dare n't—see him." It was a plea for reinforcement.

"Come!"

Once inside, she spoke to a man who appeared from the rear in his shirtsleeves.

"I—we want to see *him*."

This speech appeared sufficiently normal to the gentleman of the undertaking.

"Come right back here," he said in a cheerful business-like tone" the coffin is most done, we're just engraving the plate. He spelt his name with two l's, I presume?"

The woman nodded. I essayed to wait for her, a grip on my sleeve showed that she still needed the human touch of sympathy. Together we followed to the workshop where loudly a hammer proclaimed a wooden case being put together, and somewhat apart, on a rough bier, under a sheet, lay the figure of "him" who had not "made good," as Silverton would put it. In a little house ten miles away a girl was cursing him, and the neighbours were helping. Here in the crude noisy shop was his one mourner—the other woman.

Dry-eyed she looked at him, bullet mark and all, looked long and looked again, then the vision held before her she sought the street and turned toward the market place and the "old Man."

She dropped me as one drops a shoe, she neither knew nor cared; and I scuttled back to Nimrod and pleasant things.

We slept that night on a straw-stack in the Ordinary Man's ranch, a few miles out of Goldville. Of course, being an Ordinary Man he

had forgotten something important, so we could get no farther. The overdome was violet black that night with a delicate all-over embroidery of silver. For a long time I lay looking at it, the straw slowly settling under my weight, making a cosy nest, amply protected from the crisp night air. I was floating in the sweet upper silence when a something set it all athrill, a long drawn melodious quavering *weoooooooo*—followed by a few short, sharp shocks of sound, and then a chorus of rolling quavers, swelling and fading—*wwwooooo woooowoo*.

It did not really wake me. I knew it so well—the evening song of the coyotes. They were singing the song of the hills, and feeling that now indeed was I truly in the open, my lodging at "The Inn of the Silver Moon" lost reality and the silver wrought bowl slipped farther and farther away.

II.

REAL DANGERS OF THE OPEN VERSUS POPULAR NOTION—UNDINE'S STORY

AS already said, Undine had vagrantly answered to the will of many, and permanently to her own. During her nomadic career she had picked up several trades, such as cattle- and sheep-keeping, and at least three accomplishments, swimming, barking like a wolf, and deer-running, the last often much appreciated by the bacon-fed herder with whom she had consented awhile to tarry, taking his orders, doing his work and sharing his food and fire. Undine hated salt

pork and "camp sinkers," so if possible she provided her own sustenance—any unlucky field mouse or chipmunk not agile enough to escape her spring.

Sheep had always been associated in my mind with great green stretches of rolling park land whereon a handful of these well-kept woolly things fed picturesquely, yielding at uncertain times and in obscure ways, white fleece; so I had small sympathy with the prejudice in the West, encountered universally, against "sheepmen." Why class them among the despised? And the herders as creatures beyond the pale—outcasts? —Why? We must have food, and mutton is most delectable.

We had been travelling about a week, each day gliding by as eventless and delightful as another until I had come to the comfortable belief that in well-regulated "outfits" nothing did happen; when the accumulated bolts of Jove struck among us right busily. On a certain well-remembered day we began to pass through some very extraordinary country, unclean, desolate.

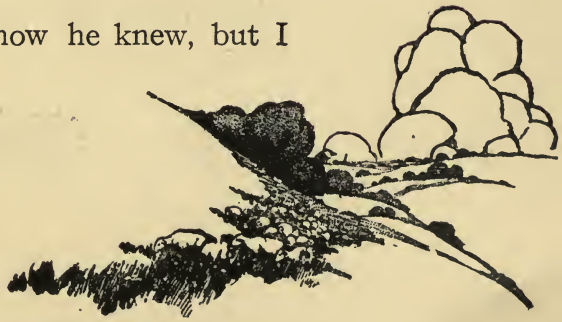
The dust was incredible. It covered us like the shower from a volcano. Nimrod was transformed into a disgusted looking Santa Claus, hair, mustache, eyebrows, even eyelashes had disappeared under a reddish coating. Over the road (the Sierra are much more man-claimed than the Rockies, one finds roads instead of trails) it hung like a blanket ten feet high of ever changing particles; the horses ploughed through it eight inches thick or more, blinding, choking, intolerable. It was the dry season, but we had seen nothing like this.

"Why is it?" I questioned and the Ordinary Man answered—

"Sheep."

Silverton elaborated—"It's a pity they've got hold of so much of these mountains. But suppose they've got to go somewhere. Gov'ment ought to regulate 'em, so many to the square mile, and not let them wipe out th' hull country. Isn't a green thing left when they get through. Worse'n a plague o' locusts. We 're gettin' close to some now."

I wondered how he knew, but I

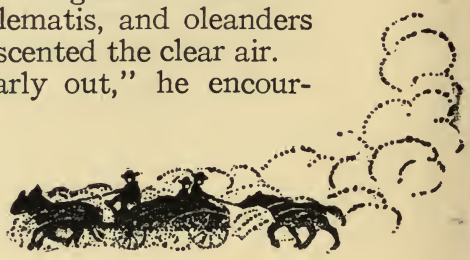


had given up trying to fathom Silverton's woodcraft, perhaps he saw tracks or the breeze brought tidings.

Yes, there was something peculiar on the wind, very peculiar and very unpleasant. Was it burning rubber? No, much worse. It was growing stronger and stronger, and the dust! Every one of the million particles bore its unspeakably malodorous freight. Oh! for the power that cleaned the Augean stables! The Ordinary Man whipped up his horses. I was seated at the time on a big roll of bedding at the back of the wagon, leading my horse by the bridle. The four horses shot forward and I had the choice of loosening the hold on my horse or myself. A lost horse seemed preferable to a lost equilibrium and that overpowering dust and smell made me indifferent.

Nimrod caught the horse but I declined to be burdened with it. I longed for a fragrant terrace far away where clematis, and oleanders and day-lilies scented the clear air.

"Pretty nearly out," he encouraged.



"Out of what?" I snapped gently.

"Sheep." I think his expression would have showed surprise if it could have penetrated the layer of dirt on his visage. "They are some distance off on the right, must be several thousands!"

I had not seen a thing. But now I heard voices, muffled sounds and bleats. So this particular brand of smell and this deluge of dust meant "sheep." We were on the necessary thoroughfare for these poor beasts to reach higher pasture lands. They were making a forced march in order to get food, for this region had already been devastated by their predecessors. The streams were defiled, the vegetation gone, nothing but dust and ruin.

Just then, a darting ball of red shot into the road, turned toward us one end from which two gleaming eyes shone, the other end was stiff for an instant and then waggled.

"Oh, you poor little doggie, what a sight you are!" It gave two short barks and several hard waggles and was off. "That is the sheep herders' mainstay," said Silverton, "the dog

does most of the work. The herders are a ornery lot, mostly Mexican trash, no decent man would take such a job."

So now I understood the prejudice. At best a herder's life represents long weeks alone, his only and constant company sheep, sheep, silly, smelly sheep. At last we left them behind and the air became humanly possible again. Being still in sheep country we were obliged to make camp where we could find water fit to drink.

A little spring in the enclosure of a deserted ranch (owner driven out by the sheep) had escaped pollution. It was sweet by its means to recover a normal appearance, and the little emerald patch was as welcome to us as the oasis to a desert traveller.

The Ordinary Man was preparing supper when a small red object crawled, rather than walked, toward us from the road, It lifted its nose from the ground and evidently seeing the object of its tracking, stretched out on the grass, a very tired dog.

After a time the eyes opened and looked at me.

"You are surely the sheep-herders' dog." The animal gave itself a shake as much as to disclaim any such connection, and with a bark of joy perceived the spring and jumped in. It was gone a long time. Had I been mistaken, was it a suicide? when up came a creature in black coat, shining and curly, emitting little yelps of pleasure as it paddled about. Then vigorously drying herself Undine went to the fire and suggested that food would be most appreciated.

She ate starvedly and then fell to licking a long cut on the body. Perhaps it was resentment of this that had made Undine change her allegiance, for change it she had, as subsequent events proved.

I have often been struck by the flimsiness of the threads from which that curious fabric "popular notion" is woven. I have never been able to examine it closely without it falling to pieces in my hands. Perhaps it is a thankless task to destroy it: it is the way half of the world wins its living from the other half. But I am tempted to poke holes in a tiny

section of it which maligns the Wild Ones. A word should be said for them. I have camped in a region where bears prowled unceasingly, where the smaller fourfoots, wolves, foxes, lynxes, knew very well of my presence. A mountain lion once walked half way around my bed as I lay peacefully sleeping, his nose not a hand's breadth from mine, as the great padded tracks next morning amply testified. I had much time to study them, as the very smell of their owner had stampeded the horses miles away. Hundreds of antelope, deer, wapiti, caribou I have seen and have never been in danger from them unless they were being molested and therefore on the defensive. In short the wild animals are no longer a menace to peaceful man.

The real dangers of the wilds that have seriously threatened my life were a common bull, and a little creature no bigger than a thumb-nail—a yellow-jacket wasp!

Rarely if ever does a dangerous wild animal in the woods "hit first," and having said this for the wild

ones, I may add that in spite of these fine words, still shackled by remnants of tradition, I am always expecting them to, and thereby prove myself a creature not wholly open to reason.

However, if something must inspect camp at night, I would far rather take chances on lion or bear, for at least they have a care where their feet are going, but a bull would as soon trample on one as on the grass alongside. He cares not a jot. A horse will carefully step over a human form but a bull has not a shred of *noblesse obligé*. He is a blatant, stupid, brutal *bully*.

As for yellow jackets, there is no creature more dreaded in horse country. Many a poor pack-horse on the trail has missed his footing and gone to his death because of them. I remember a certain "Lost Horse Cañon," the entrance of which they guarded, and where our faithful Midnight, in pain and fright, bucked himself off the trail, plunging nearly a thousand feet to the torrent below, a horrible performance which my horse came perilously near

repeating. We were only saved by my being able to grasp an overhanging branch, and thus relieved of his burden the horse scrambled up on to the trail not a second too soon. Possibly the Creator had for long been making children, cubs, puppies and other young things then; of a sudden fearing that the world might become too sweet a place, balanced by fashioning the wasp—all venom, sting and temper.

(This is really the story of Undine, but the propeller blade has to be in the air some of the time, you know.)

After supper the long twilight still lingered. Nimrod, who had been sweeping the foothills with glasses, gave utterance to this cryptic remark:

"I think I see a milk wagon! Fresh milk for breakfast, a good idea! Come Silverton, Cook, bring a pail," and the three rode away toward a small "bunch" of range cattle that had come into view on the edge of the sheep-ruined country.

Undine and I were getting acquainted. She was not a lap dog, had evidently no conception of the

part, but lay nose between paws watching me as I sang, perhaps liking the sound that the Poet had made when he strung the words together—

'Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of night!
Out of the misty eastern cave
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight! . . ."

The little dog raised her nose and sniffed tentatively, then arose in an attitude of attention. A horseman was galloping towards us. Undine sniffed again, gave a low growl, and crawled out of sight under a pile of canvas. A dirty swarthy little man drew rein, almost pulled the poor creature to its haunches. Flecked with foam, it stood trembling, breathing heavily.

"The Mexican sheep-herder of course," I thought, "cruel to everything, beware of little black men, all devil—soul like a pin-point," where had I heard that!

"Giv'-a the dog," he demanded, scowling down at me. Something inside got uncomfortably large and

thumped. I said nothing. Flinging himself to the ground, he pointed to Undine's track.

"He's here—sacre! You can no' keep!" He approached threatening, his face evil as boiling pitch. The deserted aspect of the place now penetrated to his consciousness. His darting black eyes searched about cunningly, but he failed to see a black nose and two shining beads, noting his every movement.

"Ah; mia bella!"

I retreated. He advanced, one hand outstretched. It was the signal for Undine to launch herself upon him.

"Santa Maria——sacre"——

A torrent of "hog" Spanish followed. The little dog snarled and growled at the approaching man. He kept her off by kicking as he edged toward a big stick, murder written on every line of him—poor little Undine! Running as fast as the ground would allow, for it seemed to jump up and down, I got to the bed, some distance off, and grabbed a gun. How it stuck in the scabbard! At last the hateful thing was out.

HE APPROACHED THREATENING, HIS FACE EVIL
AS BOILING PITCH

I was much afraid it would explode, in my haste; holding it in the Mexican's direction, but carefully into the ground, I commanded him to let the dog alone, get on his horse and begone.

This he did, cursing all sorts of things in his jargon, but without wasting any time, the coward! Possibly he knew as well as I, that a gun in the hands of a nervous woman is very dangerous, indeed.

When the men returned they found Undine nursing bruises, and I nursing the gun. As no harm had been done, it seemed best not to pursue the man, although Silverton stayed on guard that night in case he should return. Thus again Undine proved her right to be one of us, for if Silverton had not been watching—but then, he was.

Soon after the milkers' return I noticed Nimrod at the spring carefully washing the pails that they had brought back empty. I never have gotten the accurate details of that expedition, but I believe that when they reached the herd, Nimrod made a bleat like a calf. Several cows

looked up and ran about anxiously, showing they had calves. Silverton lassoed one of these and with the Ordinary Man's help held her, while Nimrod did the very precarious milking. He was watching the cow's feet instead of the pail, so had milked a quart or more before he noticed that the milk was streaked with blood. In sudden disgust he threw it out, plentifully splashing his horse's feet. No one now had any desire for milk, so they rode to camp.

Thus unthinkingly Nimrod set the lure for a midnight visitor. In the darkness the herd had grazed nearer and nearer. Suddenly we all heard the bellow of a bull—*urrrh—urrrh—urrrh*—at the spring, The men chased him away, and thinking no more about it I went to bed. Soon Nimrod was wriggling into his blankets nearby. How delightfully easeful that resting on air. But not yet on that eventful night was sleep to woo, and win.

That old bull had not been satisfied. He had smelled tainted milk at the spring and again was investigating in wrathful mood—*rrrhh*—

—*rrh*—stamping and snorting about, crazier got his actions, he was working himself into a frenzy. Silverton tried to drive him off. Instead, the snorting, stamping brute started our way. Silverton got out his pistol but dared not use it in the darkness so near us. I tried to jump up.

"Stay where you are, it's your only chance, he may miss us!" Commanded Nimrod.

It was awful, that waiting, expecting every moment to be trampled on—when suddenly an unlooked for champion dashed to the rescue—yap, yap, yip! It was Undine, a David for Goliath. Now her versatile training showed forth. She knew just what to do, nipping at flank and leg and darting out of reach, she turned the snorting, pawing Juggernaut and drove it far away.

After a time the doggie and Silverton and the pistol came back; but—the bull never did.

The beauty of the night had remained unquestioned and now its peace came back. I drowsed but did not sleep.

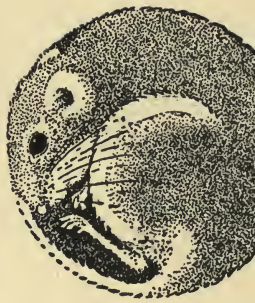
We were nearing the home of the

Big Trees and already they towered triumphantly to the sky.

How would it feel to be swinging, on the tippy top of that giant redwood? See-saw—I gave myself up to the soothing fancy—now I was swinging in it, as gently as a babe in its cradle, swish, swish—when a faint, very faint movement beneath brought me to earth with a jar and stiffened every muscle to wakefulness. Something was under the heavy canvas on which rested the rubber bed. Nervous, of course I was after all the day's excitement.

No, there it was again. Had I remembered to put my horse-hair rope around the bed, the magic rope that is supposed to keep the rattlesnakes away? *Had* I? Now I remember it was in place! Perhaps I was to have the opportunity of testing it. No one not even the oldest inhabitant, attempts to deny the numerous rattlesnakes in the Sierra. Ah! that sneaking insinuating motion, very gentle, I could hardly feel, or hear, or whatever sense it was that conveyed the intelligence—but unmistakable. It had gotten under there

somehow and was trying to get out. Did that horse-hair quite meet, or had I arranged it carelessly? I pictured the rattler going all around me trying at every undulation to pass the rope whose stiff bristles repelled its sensitive throat, perhaps it had found the opening and was gliding in! Perhaps it preferred hair ropes to any other road.



"Nimrod" said a small thin voice, "have you got the electric lamp within reach? There is a—" I did not say it, "—something under my bed. *There*, did n't you hear it?"

This time the noise was much louder.

"Squ-eee-eek."

"It's a field mouse getting jolly well squashed. Now he is gone," said the masculine voice with infinite patience and resumed his interrupted slumbers. A flash of the electric lamp showed Undine curled up comfortably near on a saddle blanket. She opened one eye and cocked an ear, politely enquiring, "Why don't you do the same?" So I did.

PART II.

IN THE ROCKIES

III.

THE GRAND CAÑON AND WHAT IT DID TO NIMROD

NIMROD and I were making one of those continent-jumping trips over which the foreigner still is aghast. We expected to join Sally and Bobbie Tevis in Idaho at the end of the week. The night before we had left Los Angeles with the thermometer over the hundred-in-the-shade mark, and as I made a restricted night toilet in a lower berth and closed tired eyes, there passed before memory's eye the sparkling light, the twinkling sand, the hot

blue sky, the air now soft, now fierce, but always caressing, and everywhere bright flowers on fence and tree and house, a riot of brilliant blooms—especially that mass of scarlet geraniums at the station blazing its name in welcome or goodbye to all who passed. In the berth above, I could hear the turnings and squirmings of Nimrod, who was performing his sleeping car penance.

"Look out, they 're coming!" It was a gentle whisper from above.

"What is it? Oh"—and my sleepy gaze fastened on a ghostly hand descending within the line of vision. It held a black object which fell to the floor with a thud; another followed. The porter would know what to do with them.

I suppose we really walked in the trail of good luck when we visited the Grand Cañon, for we saw in its most curious phase, that mightiest gash of a mighty river in its immensity and beauty, suddenly roll wonder on wonder before us, as though the whole world were striving then and there to empty its coffers in one glorious offering at the feet of God!

but we knew not what was reserved for us and when we passed from the warm Pullman sleeping car on to the platform of Flagstaff we shivered and repined.

Although it was nearly June, Nature in her vagaries had flung a snow storm around San Francisco peak and we in summer clothes with only hand baggage thought regretfully of the trunks and warm clothing that were speeding onward to Pine Cone Lodge.

Between eye-shutting and eye-opening to be plunged from warmth, light, flowers, all out-doors in joyous mood, to the sleet and snow and the wind that was almost a blizzard, and cold against which our covering seemed no protection, required a plentiful application of traveller's philosophy. The street in front of us was running rivers of slush. Nimrod was the first to recover. He broke the silence that had hung over us, leaden as the clouds above.

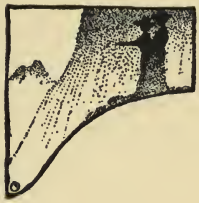
"Well, let's get into this 'one-hoss shay' and see if it can float us to the hotel—Driver, what's the best hotel? 'The Palace?' " We looked at each other with grim humour.

If it could only have been Smith's or Brown's or Jones's there might have been some chance of decent accommodation, but the "Palaces" and the "Royals"—well, we knew them.

I resisted a woman's inclination to cower and straightened to meet the cutting blast that swept around the station corner as though Boreas himself was in charge.

"Yes, there it is," Nimrod said in a resigned voice as we looked through the window of an antique omnibus upholstered in red-and-green Brussels carpet, and read a legend "The Palace Hotel" in brazen black letters on the false third-story front of a frame two-story clapboard structure that ran back on its narrow site like a train of cars. We knew already that the ground floor windows gave light to an "office" where was the clerk's desk and billboard, and which served for the lounging room. Wooden arm chairs, their backs reinforced by iron rods, to accommodate the habit of continual tilting by their occupants, were placed against the wall and

hyphenated periodically by brown earthen dishes which combined in their big round shapes the opposing emblems of cleanliness and filth. The long, broad table supplied with inkwells and cheap stationery and the local papers, all rather untidy, would be sure to occupy some portion of the office space, and the "bar," separated only by abbreviated swinging doors, would give forth its individual odours and its voices; also we knew that beyond the office was the dining room with its long tables always set with the "usuals," including toothpicks, and the kitchen, not by any means hiding its essential part in the hotel economics; while above stairs the long, narrow corridor would be broken by doors that gave the entrance to cell-like rooms, each small, square and stuffy, lighted by one window and furnished with ingrain carpet, a pine bedroom set, and the noises of one's neighbours.



We arrived and dashed through the torrent. How depressing it all was in its sordid usefulness! no extreme for good or ill that might lift it to

the picturesque. It was an expression of the crudity of man when he has broken away from the primitive and is trying to make a big showing in a cheap way, and often does he do this in the very lap of Nature's grandest achievements such as here where she has with indifference taken centuries of time and employed all the mighty agents at her command, the sun, the air, the water and the earth, all the elements to make a home for one of her vassals, the Colorado, and to paint it in all the colours that could beautify. Then does man erect a structure of his on its surface, as a fleck of soot mars the face of a beautiful woman, putting up a false front, painting its pine boards to look like brick, and its pine furniture to look like mahogany, papering its walls to look like marble, curtains that imitate lace, a melodeon that imitates a piano, tissue paper that is cut and twisted into shameless shapes of flowers in an imitation Worcester vase—nothing honest but the fly-paper and the spittoon.

It is necessary perhaps, this civil-

isation in its first tottering steps, but how different are the homes of those who live with nature, of the Indian, the frontiersman and the scout—of the life in the open that for another month I was going to lead. The blood jumped through my veins at the thought. No matter if the wind does blow, no matter if the street is a foot thick in slimy mud and the sleet beating down mercilessly; it is simply nature in a wild mood—I have seen her in worse. It seems trying to one accustomed to the pampering comforts of man's ingenuity, but soon I shall throw off that yoke and walk as a little sister with this big brother, earth.

We had given ourselves very little time to visit the Cañon and when we were informed that the stage would not run to the Cañon that day, the prospect of spending a third of the precious time in the Palace Hotel at Flagstaff met with scant favour.

"It is cold as liquid air, none of these dainty sons of the soil want to take their horses out," said Nimrod

as he stood at the window in the office looking disconsolately at the storm. The street was running rivers of mud lashed by the wind, the downpour swept past in undulating waves of sleety wetness.

"Of course, we must get to the Cañon to-night," I made answer.

"There are seventy miles of it. Can you do it?"

He needed no assurance.

"I will skirmish for a private conveyance. Can you be ready in an hour if my gold proves convincing?"

"Easily. Do you suppose we can borrow an umbrella? I saw a 'Dry Goods Emporium' down the street as we came up from the station and hope it will yield us some sweaters and warm things." I felt as bloodless as a sheet of paper.

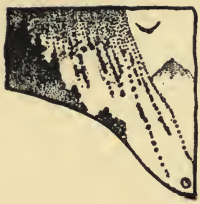
An hour later we dashed out of town behind four half-broken mustangs whose principal endeavour seemed to be to stay off the ground as much as possible. The two-seated mountain carry-all swung from side to side, sending the mud in showers around it and upon the tarpaulin

curtains that partially protected us. We were on the back seat and I wondered if we really could stay right side up.

"Driver what is the matter with the horses?" burst from me. "Oh, look at that leader! Heavens, we'll be in the ditch!" Nimrod reached out a steadying hand under the robe as he grasped the guard rail with the other hand. "Should say he was practising the hornpipe on one leg, but the driver seems to understand them."

The driver having now extricated his leader from the ditch and confined the cavorting of the wheelers to the middle of the road answered:

"Oh, they are all right, ma'am. They're a bit fresh, that's all. They'll go a nice pace after they have worked off five mile or so. Ye see they ain't no great pals with their leather yet." I gave myself a dose of "don't care" philosophy, having acquired this trick on previous occasions—"Yes, this is bad, awful, in fact, or so it seems to you, but it has happened before to others and will happen again. Are you



a craven soul? What is your fear, that you may get hurt? The real part of you cannot be hurt by anything physical, and if you are going to be hurt—well, you will be, fear will not help you. 'Cowards die many times before their deaths'—Ugh! away with it"—and began to feel better.

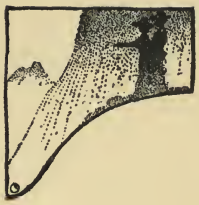
"Tra la la, tra la la, dear boy, we are really getting to the Cañon, 'the mighty channel that the mighty Colorado has worn through the ages, etc., etc.' Brrh! Isn't it cold? Fancy June behaving like this. San Francisco Peak is covered with snow. I just caught a glimpse when the clouds lifted a little. Driver, don't you think the storm is nearly over?"

The man thus addressed shifted his quid from one cheek to the other and emptied his mouth of sufficient fluid to make speech comfortable.

"It's nigh on three days, I reckon, a change's about due. The folks at the Cañon been held up since Monday. May be they won't object to seein' the mail bag."

The horses for the past fifteen miles had been going a steady gait

and now showed signs of increased activity, which I interpreted as meaning the nearness of the relay station. Although in a private conveyance we carried the mail bag and were using the post route horses. We drew up with a flourish in front of the one-story log "shack," divided equally into quarters for the men and the horses. No one was visible, but immediately there were sounds of "Whoa, you devil, whoa there, save your hide"—and a man appeared with two dancing animals partially harnessed. They represented many bloods, but principally "cayuse." Regardless of the evident equine remonstrance the men without further ado tied each to a hitching post well-separated and hastened to help the driver and a third man disentangle the four whose twenty-odd miles of hard work had not seriously impaired their viciousness. I waited until peace reigned in the vicinity of the carry-all and then climbing over the front seat in order not to disturb the side-curtains so securely fastened, prepared to descend. We were only



stopping long enough to change horses. Nimrod was already on the ground.

"Oh, how glorious it is already," I cried, "the rain has almost gone and we shall soon be able to see about us, after all. Driver, where are the fresh leaders—what's your name, please?"

The driver, a short thick-set man with a thin, rather finely cut face and drooping moustache, stopped in his task of changing certain harness from the incoming to the outgoing wheelers and brought out his remarks in an accustomed slow speech.

"My handle is Sommers, ma'am. They'll be out in a minute. Ye hit it plumb right. They're fresh, an' we'll all be ready to move when they are introduced. Now ma'am, if you'll step in"—gallantly offering to help me into the carry-all.

"But the horses aren't attached yet," I demurred. "No ma'am," said Sommers politely, with the air of having already explained, "ye see they prefer to move and it's healthier to be ready to go with them."

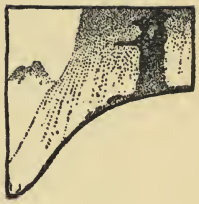
Nimrod and I got into the back seat and awaited developments, which were immediately forthcoming. The four men got the wheelers into position and the reins passed over the dashboard and secured. It was a lively skirmish, but soon over. A man remained at the head of each wheeler and the other two disappeared into the stable and after much commotion, men and horses burst into the open. I saw two mouse-coloured animals with long ears laid back viciously and the short-haired tail that suggested mule and the stamping feet and rolling eye of wicked horse. The kicking and the bucking, the plunging and rearing of these mountain products, was only equalled by the calm, irresistible determination of the men to bend brute will to theirs. At first the issue seemed doubtful, then it became apparent that slowly, with many a circling and bucking, the "jacks" were being forced in front of the wheelers, who now became excited and plunged and reared to help the general confusion.

I was beginning to understand

why it was necessary to be "ready to move." I felt a bit ill. "Oh you miserable rabbit! Your old enemy again, Fear, sitting on your shoulder. Cannot you get some of the calm of these men, if only—Oh mercy!"

This last exclamation was jerked out by a sudden lurch of the carry-all as the wheelers, breaking away from restraint, started to bolt. The brake was jammed hard down and the leaders were in the way. An awful mix-up ensued. One horse was down; phrases were flying in the air. "Whoa, there you devil!" "Here you, go sit on his head"—"Look out, this ain't no pink-tea party, Baldy's got la-igs," "Whoa there. I've got him!!" "Oh hell! Steady there, have you got it buckled?" "Hold him tight!" By some incredible sleight of hand the few buckles were fastened, the reins slipped through the guards, and Sommers jumped to his seat, gathered up the reins, loosened the brake a little, shouted "Now!" The men scrambled away from the plunging leaders—and bedlam was let loose.

The leaders reared, backed, twisted until they were so tied up in the harness that they were helpless. The three men after much struggling and great risk of injury, managed to disentangle them.



"Get a whip and lash 'em, *make* 'em go," called Sommers, as calm as though giving an order to feed them four quarts apiece. Again the order was given. "Ready—sail into them." The horses were released and before they could turn, a merciless lashing sent them forward with ears laid back. From side to side the carry-all swung, bump—thump —jerk——. We clung to each other and to the carriage. First on one wheel then on another it tottered, but the driver was clever. He made no attempt to keep the road. Here no fences confined it and the way was level and sandy with a thin carpet of low vegetation. After a mile of this I ventured to speak. There was as yet no sign of docility and the animals pursued their snake-like course.

"A fresh horse in this country evidently means an unbroken one.

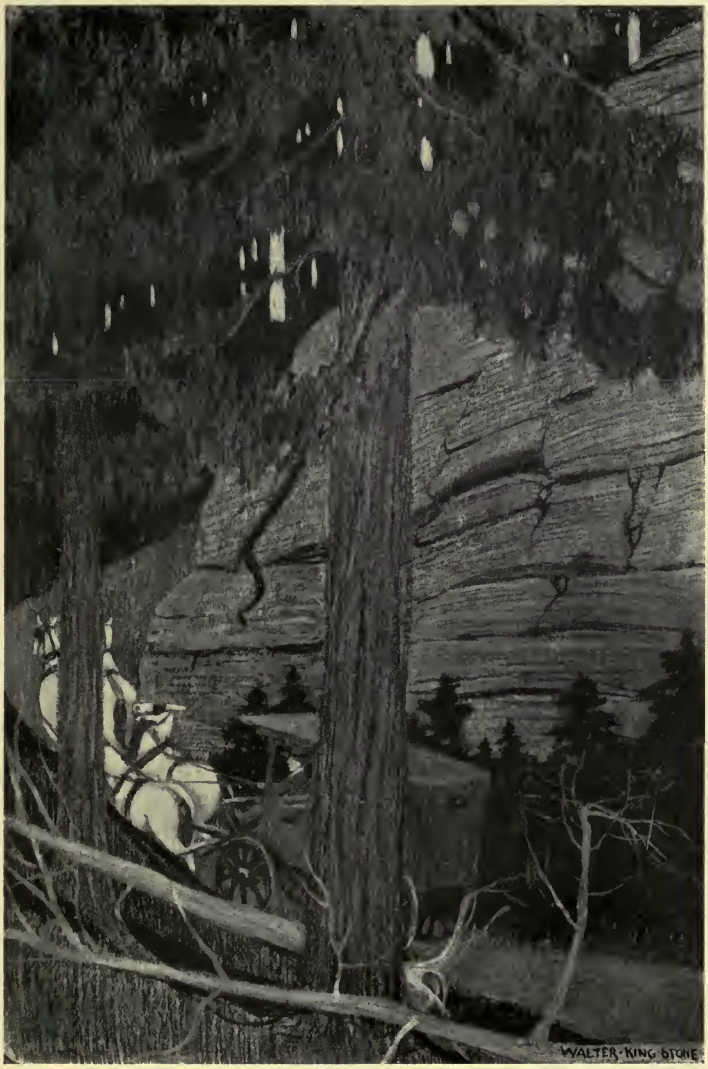
It's an outrage to have to drive with such creatures."

"Ye see, Ma'am, that's why the boss didn't specially hanker to send ye out. He don't keep no lady's hosses in this outfit, an' this being in the beginning of the season, them cayuses will know more if they live through it. But them leaders come mixed, hoss an' mule; mighty tough, an' mighty ornery."

"They ought to be broken before risking traveller's lives. Are you afraid?" Gracious! We struck a gnarled shrub and swung sidewise dangerously and I repented my loquacity. I was answered in the order of remarks.

"Yes ma'am, but it is cheaper for the Company to do it this way. No ma'am; leastways it don't count."

I wondered whether he really did know fear. Whether or not, it was evident that it did not "count." I laid the thought away after labelling it "tonic," but asked no more questions, and after three miles had worried past and a steep ascent begun, the animals had lost some of their energy, although they con-



THE ROAD LED THROUGH THE FRAGRANT DEEP-SHADOWED PINES

tinued to be nervous to the end of the relay.

The afternoon wore on. Unaccustomed to such excitement and long hours of cramped sitting, we were feeling wearied and chilled, and the sandwich lunch brought from the Palace Hotel and eaten en route, was causing discomfort.

Tired as I was, the charm of the mountains began to claim me. The storm had passed. All was damp and soggy and the sun could not break through a barrier of clouds, but the greyness was deepening into darker shadows, and the time of all the day that I loved most, its close, had come. The road had been mounting for the past two hours and at six o'clock the third and last relay station was reached. The change of horses was accomplished without much trouble, and we dashed off through the fragrant, deep-shadowed pines, on the twenty-mile home stretch to the little log hotel on the Cañon's edge. We were now on a table land clothed with alpine forest, its pungent odour was like a draught of wine, intoxicating

with a promise of all the glad days to come.

"I hope they have something substantial. No communication for three days and a party of ten snow bound there is not encouraging," said Nimrod, beating his hands together to restore circulation.

Another hour past. "See, isn't that a light," at last!

"At least there will be hot coffee," he added, apprehensively. Seventy miles of cold and storm with only a sandwich lunch having made us solicitous of creature comforts. The sounds of the wagon had brought some one to the door and a cheering bar of light streamed into the darkness. There was hot coffee and other things and with anticipation of the morrow, we stole up the rough uncarpeted stairs to a cold, bare little room, undressed shivering, and as quickly as possible sought oblivion on a bumpy mattress under calico patch-work quilts—maximum of weight and minimum of warmth. I love creature comforts, the tub bath, the warm dressing room, the nightly hair brushing, the soft light

covering and easeful bed—and when foregone, it is a deliberate renunciation for some recognised good. After all, those things do not touch the soul, and life in the mountains does. Under its spell the unimportant details of a routine life in the East shrink to their proper size and one expands as the purple lupin unfolds its sensitive leaves to the sun, and shuts them again in the dark.

In the morning I opened eyes on the figure of Nimrod perched on a chair peering through a small window in the roof.

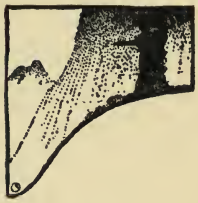
"Well?"

"Can't see a thing. A thick grey fog—might as well be on board ship. What luck!"

About eleven there were signs of the fog lifting and we, eager with anticipation, put on rubber coats and goloshes. We were cautioned not to go more than a hundred feet from the door, as the Cañon began abruptly. Hand in hand we advanced through the mist until suddenly we stopped and drew back breathless. The peculiar difference in the blankness before us showed

that in a moment we would have stepped off into space to fall—how far we could not tell, but even then, as we stood straining our eyes, appeared in ghostly forms the tops of trees. The place was full of mystery, as we stood on the edge of the unknown that peculiar stillness of a fog heavy about us, while spread before, if we could but penetrate the veil, lay unimagined wonders of Nature's treasure house. Then the thick whiteness around us began moving right to left and upward. The whole closed curtain rose wave after wave, mile after mile, and revealed an expanse of colour and form shining in the sunlight stretching on—on—to the end of the world, so appallingly beautiful that I felt my brain reel. Turning away from the terrifying grandeur of it, I sank to the ground. The suddenness of the revelation had left no time for preparation, and I gazed at the commonplace grass blades to restore my balance.

In a moment, half ashamed of so much emotion, I looked up to see Nimrod disappearing into the stable.



He was gone so long that I began to feel worried; then he came back looking triumphant and a little sheepish. Without a word he thrust an envelope into my hand with something written on it. Mushrooms grow best in dark detritus, the edelweiss scorns all but the most rugged spot in which to flower, Nimrod in a *pigstye* had produced this:

"A thousand miles—the continent upheaving
Thro storms of sand, of rain, of driving snow,
And then a sudden pause upon an awful hidden brink
Where all upheaval seemed to fail, an inch before your very feet.
The reason lost, the universe forgot, in mists unknown, immeasurable.

And then a change:
This way and that the Powers uproll the veil;
An inch beyond your very foot a great abyss.
Down! down! down! the mists are rolled away,
Thousands upon thousands of headlong dizzy feet.
Down! down! down! with piney forests on their nearest side,
More small than moss,
Down! down! down! to blue eternity.

And up! up! up! the swirling mists are rolled,
Till peaks prismatic gleam and rise
In sheen of purple, opal, red and gold.
Up! up! in ranks until they seem to comb the flying scud
That swims upon the heaven of heavens;
And shadowy peaks still higher yet appear,
And up and up and upward still, till lost in blue eternity.

And still the mist is rolled away,
And in the light of revelation there,
Far down—unspeakably far,
A long thin winding shining line—gray green,
The river—ancient as the earth—
Whose aqua-fortis flood, God's graver was,
With which this gorge was cut.
Profounder than the gulfs between the stars it seemed,
And awful as the day of Judgment come.

One moment there the sun refulgent shone;
Then warning, "Thou hast seen enough
For all thy days remaining."
Far down the mist of mists is rolled again
A film, a veil, a curtain-like futurity,
The last, the nearest of the peak is hid,
And just an inch beyond your very foot
An awful brink abysmal."

Just think what it did to him—a calliper scientist.

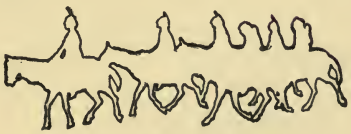
In a place homely—most homely—

and time-tried he had sought mental equilibrium. He had to run away from the tremendous vision to unload his mind of the burden, ere it was crushed!

In the sublime there is no laughter; so more sanely now we surveyed the scene. All the colours of the rainbow blazed mile after mile away like some titanic jewel casket, with the gem of all, the boiling, seething flood of the Colorado flashing like a tiny streak of lightning, down crag after crag, valley after valley, below.

So this was the Cañon that painters had dared to portray, that writers had dared to describe. I was drunk with the gorgeous beauty and immensity of it, even glad to turn away and be busied with the details of a horseback ride along the brink. We reluctantly decided to give up the trip down the Cañon, as Hank's Trail was out of repair and dangerous owing to the storm. The guides were unwilling to take us that day, and we could not wait.

As I was getting into the saddle, having obtained a battered riding



skirt, a nomadic "outfit" of Indians came up to the hotel. There were about twenty horses, five men and several women, children and dogs. They were not allowed to stop, but passed at a snail's pace, while two of the men bartered badger skins for tobacco and sugar, and a squaw displayed some baskets and beadwork of Apache designs.

"It is good to be here before the railroad and the funicular to the bottom and the modern hotel and all the tiresome civilisation that is sure to come, and before the Indians give us Greek beadwork."

"The savages out-savaged," Nimrod replied, mounting his animal, and gibed no more, for the Buckskin playfully rolled his eyes and bucked and bucked and bucked.

IV.

A DISCURSION ON THE BRONCHO

WE were to "outfit" at PineConeLodge,Idaho, ninety miles from the railroad. The "Tevi," our usual manner of designating Sally and Bobbie plurally, were already waiting charged with the task of making arrangements. Bert Sommers came with us; Nimrod providently annexed him at the Cañon, knowing that he was footloose and a native of the Bitter Roots.

"He knows how to manage these animated pepper pots they call

horses, and he knows the country!" Enough, a good guide is a precious thing, to be secured when found, like a nugget in the road.

Sally Tevis is wonderful. She is not exceptionally beautiful, but she makes one think she is. Her figure is long and thin, her face is thin and long, her hair is black and straight, her complexion is sallow from a liberal allowance of ill health and she is no longer young, fast losing the thirties; but the wit, keen perception, wide cultivation and the initiated yet sweet outlook on life, makes so brilliant a spirit that it flares through a common-place exterior as the sun through a window. I always think of her as young and beautiful. She is, for her spirit is that and she is all spirit. "A wisp of fire," Bobbie once called her.

The Tevi rode out several miles to meet us. Sally was attired in a very new costume of grey corduroy elaborately banded and vested with leather, the same as her high boots. The skirt was short and artistically bifurcated. "It is its *première*—

the only model that does not make a woman look a fright," she said, submitting to my inspection— "Bobbie approves, he hinted at rather more leather, but it will stand alone now, I think. It is very heavy and stiff but Bobbie would have it match his, and you know the Duchess —— has one in which she rides 'cross country. Otherwise no, not at all for little Sally. You look as fresh and lovely as ever" (Sally always says agreeable things) "but you must be tired. Everything is packed ready for to-morrow from the essential powderpuff in my saddle bag to the unimportant food and bedding." She deposited a light kiss on the left cheek as I scrambled out of the buckboard over saddles and bundles.

"You won't find anything here but a few decrepit 'lung-ers' and a man with a grouch. He may be distinguished by a scowl and green plaid stockings. Green is the safety signal, but don't be deceived; I have suffered, so I have warned."

We ate a nondescript meal to this lively accompaniment and going

some distance from the rambling log "shack" and its cluster of one-room log cabins that formed Pine Cone Lodge, the Tevi, Nimrod and I spent the afternoon in target practice, for later when we are in game country we could not be banging guns and disturbing all the game within ten miles.

Nimrod does not shoot except with the camera, gave it up long ago. He hunts the animals longer and harder than any to study them. I had one rifle and the Tevi had six "shooting irons." Not that the Tevi are so bloodthirsty but Bobbie Tevis attended to the equipment and Bobbie has theories. Everything he has, Sally must have; it easily resulted in an arsenal, two rifles, two shotguns, a Mauser and a twenty-two for small things; and Sally industriously hunts and shoots when Bobbie hunts and shoots, wears waterproof boots like his and a hat like his, and is also in grey-brown clothes the colour of the woods. A red shirt waist (red is Sally's colour), independently purchased, was left behind.

"Bobbie was afraid the game

might see it or smell it through the leatheroid telescope and fly the country," Sally explained, giving her husband an affectionate pat, to extract any possible sting.

"You know, Petty, I suggested your bringing it for wear in camp."

"Yes, but it came out at the last minute to make room for that extra hundred rounds of ammunition. We are quite ready to be subsidised by some South American government. Good, Bobbie, that was a splendid shot, a bull's eye, was n't it?"

It was barely in the white, but she said it to make up. If once in a while she rubbed the velvet of Bobbie's good temper the wrong way, she immediately smoothed it back again. Perhaps I should not expose her methods but they are so successful, and Nimrod says *he* does not object to being flattered even when he suspects the process, if it is done artistically. Most men are that way, it would seem.

Sally is a good shot; in spite of her brown eyes she rarely misses the bull's eye. Bobbie is as proud of it as though it were his accomplishment.

"I wonder what luck in horses this time," said Nimrod. "I hope they are safe."

The Tevi exchanged glances.

"Well, we have done our best," Bobbie exclaimed, in dogged tones that suggested history.

"You may as well tell them now," said Sally. "We'll never be able not to, it is too good a story."

"There is one thing a tenderfoot can count on in buying horses out here. He will get the worst of it," Nimrod said consolingly.

"That's right," and Bobbie fetched a deep sigh—"you saw the thing I was riding to-day? Well, that's my latest."

"Go on, Bobbie. It is all in the day's work." His wife's eyes twinkled sympathetically.

"Well, there is a chap here with the most of his palate gone, talked as though he had a hot potato in his mouth, fishy eyes, dirty, lazy, Dick Jones, he *is* a duffer."

"Katy is all right for Pet, but the 'Captain' Lusk you know, who owns this lodge, had nothing I wanted to ride, so I decided to send Jones to

Silver City, over the mountains by a short cut, to get me a good saddle horse. He was always mumbling what a great judge of 'hoss flesh' he was. His instructions were, 'easy-gaited, fast walker, plenty of spirit, but no mean tricks, broken to game shooting from the saddle, not particular as to color so long as it be not white.' I never could endure a white horse. The price was to be twenty dollars, or at most twenty-five, and a five-dollar bonus for going. As I had nothing but a hundred-dollar bill and no one here had change—I gave it to him. Charley, our cook, was standing near during the transaction. He disappeared quickly toward the 'bar' to get a drink and thus fortified, ejaculated to a group of loafers—'Hun'red—Jones—Silver City—hoss—be goll-darned!'

"Such loquacity for him was significant and I own I had misgivings, so I did not bother Sally with the details of my little transaction."

"You said you had sent him to get a horse, but I remember, it took

Dick four hours to get himself out of the 'bar' and into the saddle," put in Sally, "but at last he rode away down the trail, a hunched up figure in gray flannel shirt, dilapidated vest and trousers, battered hat and boots, with luggage to the extent of a coat and a slicker tied on behind."

"That was Monday," continued Bobbie; "I expected that he would return the following evening, but was not surprised that Tuesday night passed and no sign of Dick. Wednesday night came and went. On Thursday I mentioned my fear to the boys that something had happened him. It was received without concern. 'Oh, he'll come back all right. He's got a gun. If there was anything wrong we'd hear.' But my conjectures as to what might be detaining him elicited no information.

"On Friday, yesterday, the Captain, spurred by my suggestion to send a search party for the missing Dick, spoke out—

" 'Now don't you worry about Dick Jones. He don't know a horse

from a picket pin, and as fer ridin' he couldn't set on the ground 'thout holdin' onto the bushes; but he'll bring you a hoss all right, an' he'll be back to-night or to-morrow—*that hundred can't last much longer.* If ye didn't want him to cut loose, ye had no call to give it to him.'

"Sally heard this speech—and behaved like an angel. Well, we waited and waited, until this morning, when taking one of my accustomed glances up the Silver City trail I spied two objects approaching."

Bobbie stopped overcome by his emotions. Sally finished.

"A rusty bay on which sat a man in all the glory of a *new* ready-made suit, blue-flannel shirt, red necktie, *new* hat, *new* boots, from which projected huge spurs, and behind, in tow, was—a gaunt *white* horse. White, my dears, *white*. With sagging head and lagging feet, Bobbie's charger approached; with one accord we went into the shack, shut the door, sat down on the table and laughed till we were weak."

"You see him!" exclaimed Bobbie. "He is a broken down cavalry horse

—worse than being tossed in a blanket trying to ride him.

"He couldn't get up a jump if a cannon exploded over him. Dick, aggrieved by my lack of enthusiasm, demonstrated how gun-broken the creature was by emptying his revolver, over, under, behind, and in front of him.

" 'Why don't you try one here?' I asked, putting a finger on the animal's sunken temple. If you could have heard his unpalated explanation of his bargain, 'twenty-five dollars, dirt cheap—finest hoss in the mountains, etc.' Of course the seventy was not forthcoming. With an indignant surprise he announced his intention of working it out. He then took his new clothes and his very seedy face into retirement to sleep it off. Has not been seen since."

"We have christened the horse, 'The Whited Sepulchre.' But it is all right for to-morrow," Sally added quickly. "Bobbie discovered that the Captain has some good saddle horses up his sleeve for extra stipend."

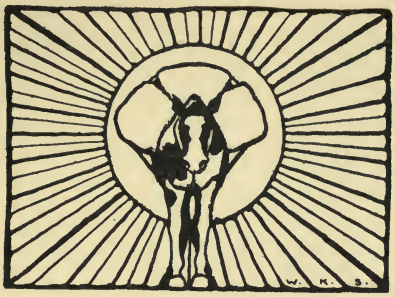
Bobbie's face lighted up with his genial smile.

"*Yours*, Mrs. Nimrod, is all right, I'll warrant. She was offered to us for twenty dollars by an impecunious cowboy who was stopping here a day or two. Kentuck he called her! She is a beauty for a mountain pony, slim, light, clean built, with chestnut coat, almost glossy in spite of no grooming, long black mane and tail. There must be a good strain of the blue grass in her—suppose that accounts for her name—and easy gaited, she can go like the wind. The mountain mixture makes her tough."

Nimrod nodded—"A thoroughbred Kentuckian would go to pieces in these mountains."

"Of course, couldn't stand the hills and the altitude. I have ridden the horse for a couple of days. She is great, a flyer, easy on the bit, no tricks, gentle, high-strung. I closed that bargain like a shot, and afterwards told the chap he was crazy for letting her go. He was mounted on a shabby cow pony. 'She's all the things you say, and a

leetle more,' he said, 'look out for her, bein' a woman-hoss.' With that he rode away, a queer look in his face. I think he had been drinking. She is a beauty, and no mistake."



V.

ON THE MARCH

THE next morning we were to start at ten. Everybody had been up since daybreak, trying to reduce order from the chaotic scene in front of the lodge.

It was already eleven o'clock. Sixteen laden animals were tied to every convenient post, tree or stump, saddle horses with reins trailing—the Western horse is taught to stand when the reins are on the ground—pawed and fidgeted. There was a certain glum feeling in the air caused by Lusk, who secretly

disapproved of taking women on such a rough trip. It more or less affected the other guides.

"Captain, we must have another pack-horse. Have you any left?" asked Nimrod. Lusk nodded and disappeared along the path up stream. Soon he returned with a queer expression on his face and behind him, at the length of a rope, was a dusty, sad-looking bay with a big collar of yellow-eyed daisies nodding their heads jauntily at every step. The three guides looked as though they had seen a banshee. Nimrod, with that strained look that comes when one wants to laugh, pulled the male Tevis behind a cabin, while Sally, with far too innocent a face, looked on. I remembered that she too had gone along that path shortly before.

"Well, I'll be gashed," Sommers muttered, looking at the garland, as he threw the packsaddle into place. The bay laid back his ears.

"Ornery?" His question was put to Lusk, who nodded in the affirmative. Charley, seeing the nod, stood ready to assist. Adjusting the ropes

preparatory to the diamond hitch, Lusk gingerly keeping a sharp lookout for the animal's legs, ears and eye, lifted a pannier into position. That was the signal—in spite of Charley who was trying to hold up the head, down it went, the back humped suddenly, and Badger shot into the air, landed stiffly all four feet together, gave himself a shake, and resumed his normal pose bare of all encumbrances, save the daisy garland rakishly cocked on one ear. They felt it made them ridiculous, yet not one of the three men would deign to remove it; hating the thing as though each nodding bloom were a viper ready to attack, they ignored it elaborately. Three times did Badger buck off his pack and each time all that remained from the wreck was his decoration. It stuck to him through all his vicissitudes like a pet sin and at last, when conquered, he was guided into line, a crushed and withered chaplet still hung round his neck, mocking reminder that there were "women in the outfit." A furtive wink at me was the only

indication that Sally was enjoying the guides' discomfiture.

With the thudding of hoofs and a cloud of dust the pack-horses were driven out of the enclosure. Nimrod took the lead, the Tevi and I with him; our horses, impatient at the long delay, pranced and curveted under the restraining bit.

The pace must be slow; a galloping pack-horse soon loses his burden. But the animals behaved well. They all belonged to Lusk's "bunch," and knew each other. Those who were chums got together, and those who were fussy chose their favourite positions in the train.

Dear things, they have their personalities as well as humans and I soon made the acquaintance of some of them. Daisy, the blue-skin donkey, was second in line, only the old white horse, Billy, her favourite, in front. Sommers, skilfully landing a pebble on her as she was breaking line by trying to browse by the wayside, called in a tone of reproach, although guiltless of French: "Marguerite, get out of that." Daisy, thus doubly admonished, flirted her

tail, drooped her left ear rakishly, and returned to business. Daisy is the morale of the pack-train. She knows just how many pounds she should carry without bucking off her pack, she can calculate to the fraction of an inch whether or not the space between two trees will allow her pack, which projects far beyond her sides, to pass. She knows when on the march that she has to attend to business. She has a genius for picking out the best trail, avoiding bogs, logs, wasps' nests and overhanging branches. She has been known to grope her way across a bog on a sunken, invisible log. She will allow no one in front of her but a man on horseback or Billy, a rather stupid horse for whom she has an attachment. She carries the bottles and breakables, and being a quick walker keeps Billy up to his work; in any other part of the line he lags badly, is very lazy and much given to side nibbling. Charcoal, a black horse, has developed this trait into an art. He chooses the middle of the train, that being usually farthest from human interference, and no matter how

high his head is tied he seems to manage to feed, a fast walker and cunning, he has been a good saddle horse, until a streak of outlawry reduced him to the ranks, and feed he will, on duty or not. He has been known to take advantage of a hill-side or a ditch in order to bring his tied-up head within range of the grass, and a favourite trick to meet the difficulty is lying down. He has long since demonstrated that it is better to let him have his way. His method is to leave the line of horses, all going in single file, dash ahead, nibble by the roadside until the train catches up to him, whereupon he will fall into the vacant place that he considers his. In the timber he behaves himself, as there are no temptations, and many knocks and falls have taught him that it is easier to let someone else pick the trail for him. Molly, the buckskin, is always the last if she can arrange it. In her equine fashion she seems to have worked out the problem of getting through the march with as little trouble as possible.

This brings her next to Charley,

the cook, whose proximity and authority keep her in the trail. Like some humans she is happier within sight of the cross, and she has noticed that her companions one and two ahead, get all the admonishing pebbles. She likes to have Baldy, a raw-boned bay, in front of her in spite of his unpleasant possession of a free-flying pair of heels. Resignation is her chief attribute. Baldy, aside from, or because of, the above-mentioned trait, is a professional bucker. He always expects to buck off his pack once or twice the first morning, but after that preliminary flourish he behaves like a gentleman. Baldy's dashing spirit seems to captivate the ladies, for Maybell always struggles for the place in front of him to secure the bittersweet of his friendly nips at tail and flank. Maybell is a brown mare of cow-like disposition and structure. Upon her pot-bellied frame no saddle will stick, and although the poor thing was cinched within an inch of her life, apparently, so copious were the groans and wheezings, a cunning device of blowing herself

out enabled her, when the operation was over, to shrink comfortably within her girths, and soon the pack would go careening to one side, if not strewn on the ground. Maybell on this occasion reserved her contribution to the general confusion incidental to starting, until the river was reached.

Nimrod leading, Lusk and Sommers in the water guiding, and Charley bringing up the rear, the horses were getting through nicely when a cry of "Maybell!" turned all eyes to the middle of the stream where the unfortunate animal was struggling in the water. Her pack had turned completely under, making a resistance to the rushing current up to her withers too great for Maybell to withstand. She was swept completely off her feet. I saw Sommers and Lusk spur their horses to the rescue. There was a swirling splashing of water, Baldy and Molly stampeded and got into deep water where they had to swim, the packs getting soaked, and Charley struggling to lead them to the bank. Nimrod directing me to continue to lead

the train so as to get them all out of the stream, galloped back, Bobbie with him, to guide the other startled animals safely into the shallows.

Meanwhile a skilful bit of work was going on in the middle of the stream. Maybell, frenzied and helpless, tied up with loosened ropes, was kicking furiously. Lusk dexterously managed to get a rope around her neck and fastened the other end to his pommel, held her head up, while Sommers struggled to get near enough to cut one of the girths; all three were being swept down stream by the swift current. At last he succeeded, another broke, and Maybell, partially released from her burdens, was towed to shore, where by this time all the horses in a disorganised group, were awaiting.

Without a word Lusk galloped down stream along the bank keeping track of the floating bundle until it struck against a boulder and lodged there. I was much pleased to see his loyal solicitude for our stuff.

"It's *his* bedding, you know," said Charley with a chuckle. "He

knows better than to put anything else on Maybell. It will be kinder moist for a snooze. There goes a shoe. He's got it." In half an hour Maybell's soggy burden was in place, various cinches tightened and the train again in line, jogging along comfortably for the day now, I hoped, at the usual three miles an hour gait.

The trail wound up an easy ascent through pleasant meadows, jewelled with dainty purple lupin bloom and the feathery red-top, and, scattered freely with great patches of daisies, like Nature's linen on the grass to bleach: through groves of aspen fluttering careless leaves for every vagrant zephyr and into the dark-hearted pines, mysterious with the messages of the ages past, ere man was born, and the gods of the growing things trod their shaded aisles. The trail slipped under fallen forest prides, the mighty sticks that time had felled as easily as the sapling is broken by the wind. It leaped over baby brooks just learning to run down the hillside, and slipped from stone to stone, to where the torrents dashed

along. It stopped at the brink of a cañon and began again on the other side, leaving the trusting traveller, without guidance, to get over the chasm as best he might. It grew faint sometimes and ran wild in a choice of ways whimsically concealing its direction so that only the skilled could follow. It forked without sign to tell its bent, save a broken twig, crushed grass blade, or overturned pebble—frail witness for the tenderfoot; and at last it left the earth altogether and joined the points of the compass, the sun and the Polar star.

Then "Captain" took the lead; he scanned the ascent sharply and began to pick a trail around bushes and boulders and over the crumbling gravelly soil. We fell into line plod—plod—plod—the breathing of horses, the creaking of leather, the tinkle of a bell on Daisy, the rattle of tinware on Dolly, plod—plod—and another table-land was reached. Through heavy timber now, dodging brambles, jumping logs, on and on, hour after hour; unable to endure the saddle cramp, I was

walking, panting and breathless with exercise in that altitude. The blood pounded in my head with such a noise that Sally caught an arm before I realised that she had been speaking.

"We camp beyond the clearing, I rode on to tell you. How do you like Kentuck? Katy appears to be all the Captain claims for her, steady, mountain-wise and plenty of nerve." She began to sing softly—

"Sweet Katy Conner,
I dote upon her.
Kate, Kate, my charming Kate,
I hope you'll carry me,
Nor please don't take a notion
Of complicated motion
And fling my precious bonelets
In the branches of a tree."

What did I think of Kentuck? There certainly was something queer about her. Perhaps it was that cowboy calling her a "woman-hoss" put it into my head, but only a short time ago, I had felt Kentuck suddenly getting ready to jump. I could not imagine why. There was a stick, perhaps two inches thick, lying in

the trail, but she had gathered herself together and jumped high enough to have cleared a three-foot log. Being unprepared, I acquired a horrid crick in the neck. Since then, however, she had passed other sticks and paid no attention to them. I decided a fly must have stung her and made answer—

"She is a treasure, canters like an automobile rocking-chair. Fast walker, too, which is a comfort on the march."

The trail had arrived and at once lost itself in a wide meadow, as level and safe as a boulevard, not even a badger hole in sight. So we broke into a canter—glorious motion, the air, sparkling wine, when like a rocket Kentuck jumped in the air and stopped stock still, trembling, all four feet together. I came down on her neck, by some wonder did not go over, and managed to work back over the pommel into the saddle again.

"What on earth was that?" I inquired. Sally looked worried and said I should be careful.

"Of what?" I demanded, rather

nettled. Considerably shaken, we proceeded at a walk to follow the pack-train, perhaps half a mile away, when we came to a natural ditch, a crack in the earth about four feet wide and six or seven feet deep. Katy was a little ahead. She jumped across it, but Kentuck, my treasure, tried to *step* across, and so down she plunged into the opening while I went tumbling, fortunately, on to the opposite bank, it proved, as there was no room for two in the crevice.

The mare was up in an instant, I took more time; the ride was becoming unpleasurably full of incident. The problem now presented was how to get her out of that crack! The walls of it were absolutely straight. Picking up the bridle with a forked stick, I led her several hundred yards and then sat down. Why try to get her up? Why try to do anything but lie in the lap of my sorrows? Meanwhile Sally's signal of distress was bringing Nimrod.

He soon extracted Kentuck from the fissure and the symptoms of her behaviour from me.

THE RIDE WAS BECOMING UNPLEASURABLY
FULL OF INCIDENT

"The mare is locoed, all the symptoms," he announced.

"Locoed!" echoed Bobbie, who had arrived in time to hear the tale. "I know what *that* means! Then she is really luny, sees things, a little thing looks big, another big thing looks little at the same time. They say that a horse or cow that eats of the loco weed never is cured. It's like the opium habit or "hasheesh" mighty uncanny. They go along for days and weeks without an attack, then all of a sudden there's the devil to pay." Bobbie settled in a heap on his horse! His chagrin was so obliterating, it was funny. "Mrs. Nimrod what do you think of me! I'll never buy another horse! You are welcome to use me for a door mat!"

My feelings had sustained the principal injury, so it behooved me to be magnanimous.

"Cæsar once made a mistake, I believe."

I rode the rest of the way on Bobbie's other failure, the "Whited Sepulchre." He insisted upon it, while he walked behind leading Ken-

tuck, Kentuck looking as innocent as a basket of figs in which the viper rests. No more with us, at least, would she toil or bear a burden.

"Thus is vice rewarded," commented Sally when a few moments later, at camp, my saddle dropped from the mare and she was free to roam the mountains, to seek her favourite food, thrive on the luxuriant grass and drink from the clearest streams. I sank back into the pine needles, a sweet sense of ease after exertion. Thrice welcome rest the reward of a difficult day, and lavishly did nature send her minions to attend—the fragrance of dead pine, the fillip of ozone, and the caressing voices of breeze-blown leaves.

Too soon the bustle of making camp assailed, and determined not to show the white feather, I too, became one of the camp scene. All were busy. Nimrod, in haste to provide me with comfort, was starting the fire. The Tevi were puzzling over the raising of a tent, the guides were unloading tired animals as swiftly as possible, sweated blankets were

taken from aching backs, hobbles snapped on forelegs, and with much joyous kicking of hind-legs, frisking and rolling in the dust, great solace to an itching skin, the 'bunch,' kept together by Daisy's bell, ambled afield. Surplus provisions were all stacked neatly in a pile ready for the morning, and covered with canvas in case of showers; provisions and utensils were clustered near the cook fire, where Charley had begun preparations for the evening meal and between times chopped wood. Lusk and Sommers assisted in putting up the tents, so that we could "move in," rubber beds were blown up, sleeping beds placed on top, night things laid out, change of clothing, rubber tub, toilet necessaries needed for the morning, the candle lamp, and matches handy. In a tent a thing unvailable is a thing lost.

We all worked. It was good exercise after long hours in the saddle and we knew well the independent spirit of these mountaineers. They as little expect to render personal service as the Secretary of a Company

expects to be the body slave of its President.

A gay little offshoot of the rushing brook beyond, babbled past our tent door. Nimrod was sketching some great blue berries that hung over it. Again I flung myself on the bank to rest a "vast half-hour" before dinner. How plentifully hunger throws itself about in this active life!

"If anyone should happen to take a photograph of this scene it would meet with my approval," said Nimrod, looking hard at me. "The camera is on my saddle pommel over there. You can see I'm busy." I arose resignedly; evidently no lotus eating was to be tolerated in that camp.

"'First one thing and then another, always cheerful and busy, that's my motto,' said the old woman as she dug up flowers to see if they were growing. Nimrod, will you set your hat back a little, please. Sally, put down that towel, that's a dear. Tut, tut, Bobbie Tevis, I suspect you of posing, you have not carried that gun all day and there is

no possibility of bear until to-morrow."

"It's Sally's, I am going to clean it," was the outraged rejoinder, by which the wise may know to just what stage the "foto" had progressed.

VI.

A FIRE RIDE

IN THE East one may have nothing more original than a banana peel or a railroad accident to threaten life, but in the Rockies one has flood, fire, cyclone, quicksand, bog-holes in endless variety, and animals from the fretful quill-pig in his quills to the fighting elk, equipped with an arsenal of polished ivory points.

It happened on the Fourth of July about an hour after the usual cavalcade had strung out for the day's march, that we met with an adven-

ture so full of pyrotechnics that it seemed as though even here must the spirit of the "signers" penetrate. We noticed a peculiar haze that grew rapidly denser. "A forest fire on ahead," Nimrod said; and soon we saw before us a great forest belt where a fire had been raging for days.

A few forest rangers had been struggling with it, but they were able only to keep the greedy monster from extending its sweep on each side as it ate its way ravenously down the wind. The broad track of destruction, two or three miles wide, was saddening to see—tree trunks lying prostrate in a smoking mass of children-trees and forest growth, or still upright, pointing charred and maimed signals to heaven. The air was grey with flying ashes and the flames leaped and crackled as they ran along the ground through the berry bushes and dead leaves, and worked along the tree branches that a moment before had been beautiful with life; changing all things, as at the blight of a witch's wand, from a riot of colour, brilliant greens, browns, orange and scarlet—to

mourning, all the well-loved forms of the forest shrivelled and twisted, draped in leaden greys and deepest black. What pain, what sorrow, what beauty spoiled, what needless waste, what visions of the underworld laid bare! It might have been the enchanted circle that always in Fairyland protects the Beauty and Delight beyond.

To cross it was like one of the labours of Hercules, but there was no way around; either forward, or retreat. "Cap'n," who was leading, had something of Napoleon in him, and this was evidently not his Moscow. So into this havoc where the Fire King had passed but had not yet wholly given up his reign, we, and the entire pack-train, plunged. The horses were kept on a sharp trot, for the ground was still scorching hot in places. Each member of the party, Sally and myself included, took two or three pack horses to drive ahead to keep them "pushed along" better. The trail was nearly obliterated; our course wound in and out trying to avoid obstacles, old and new. Suddenly the horse before

me gave a great leap over a burning tree that had just fallen. I was riding Katy that day. She snorted, as well she might, when she saw the three foot log with dancing flames its entire length barring the way.

How were we going to get over that thing that seemed alive with wicked tongues darting, ready to devour? There was no time to be lost, and Katy took a high jump to avoid the flames, which, however, must have singed her, for she gave a double jump and a short run upon landing which was decidedly disconcerting. But I had not much time to think. There was a shout ahead, a stampede of pack-animals, and another burning tree crashed across my path. Falling trees were the greatest danger; at any time one of us might be felled to the earth. Katy and I took that tree at a trot, and another beyond. It was no place to linger; the air was electric.

Weirdly strange, yet not strange. Where had I been through all this before? It assailed my senses and my memory. How familiar it seemed —the wonderful ringing Wagner

fire-music was in my ears—beautiful, fearful, spellbinding. Brunhild was not so much to be pitied after all. The intoxication of Loki was upon me.

And what erratic tricks he plays! On my left I noticed the skeleton form of what had been a raspberry bush. Not a leaf was left—not a green bramble, but still in the very heart of it was one ripe, luscious-looking berry, hanging like a ruby in the midst of ruin. How had it escaped—that one touch of beauty?

Near it was another impish trick of the conqueror—a weird sight indeed. A high white pine tree, so tall that its green branches waved triumphantly over the torment below, so sturdy and vigorous that its smooth bark had resisted the flames, but alas of no avail. The enemy had eaten into its heart; it was enduring the tortures of Prometheus. One side of its mighty base, five feet through, had been carved out as neatly as though fashioned by man for a fireplace, and here the flames crackled merrily, taking as does the vampire, its treasure of life, while

the green plumes waved far above, as yet unconscious of their fate.

We had gone over two miles, jumping, dodging, trotting and stumbling, throats and eyes smarting from the smoke until the two miles seemed twenty, when I saw that we were leaving the region of living fire and passing through a city of the dead. It had been a forest of young pines from four to ten inches thick, but now reduced to sorry plight, a bewildering mass of charred sticks streaking upwards like accusing fingers from those in torment. In my ignorance I was relieved, thinking we were "out of the woods"; but this proved the worst of all, for the sticks toppled over without warning —a breath of wind, the vibration of the horses' feet—and fell before the horses, even upon them, if they were not spry—a ghostly company, without stability, threatening injury at every turn.

My clothes lashed with blackened branches had the general appearance of the zebra's skin. Every separate muscle ached, my knees were bruised from encounters with the trees which

were very close together; but so far there had been no serious damage to the outfit.

At last it was growing dark. I had settled down to a certain grim endurance, and had treated my nerves to a favourite tonic of which I have made mention before, that "cowards die many times before their death; the valiant never taste of death but once," when I heard a shout ahead which I knew must mean "Lost Horse Creek and our camping ground."

Instantly my thoughts sped to that magnificent place of comfort —camp—where hunger and thirst and weariness would vanish. The picture was so pleasant that I quite forgot the very material part of me which just at that moment was in danger. But Katy, fortunately, was not imaginative, and saw that a six-inch tree was falling directly upon us. She quivered from head to foot and waited a second for the word of command that did not come, then she gave a great bound and stopped so short that I nearly went on without her. Then

I too saw the awful thing that was descending upon us. I jerked back, but a near sapling, released by the fall of the parent tree, was also coming down. We were between the two.

Not having a woodman's eye I did not know how they were going to fall—did not know which way to move. "When you don't know what to do, don't do it" is a mountain adage. I clinched my teeth and waited. There were shouts, but meaningless to me, although I caught a glimpse of a man's pale face. One instant of suspense and the big tree crashed in front of Katy's nose. She started back in terror right in front of the falling sapling. I lashed her forward just in time to escape, and it came shivering down on Katy's rump, nearly bringing her to the ground. She recovered at once, and wildly started to run.

As it was impossible to run in those ruins and Katy was a mountain pony and knew it, she did the best she could with a series of jumps in the down timber, the repetition of which I can very well do without.

I felt like one of the monkeys at the circus that are strapped on the pony's backs—the pommel alone saved me and my self-respect.

But we got out without further mishap, and after Katy had caught up with old Billy, three horses ahead, and told in a neigh or two all about it, she carried my tired bones to camp in tranquillity.

Camp! Oh, the sweetness and peace of that nook in the mountain meadow, rich with grass for the horses, the snow peaks far above, the right breeze blowing, the intimate little brook, fringed with willows, gurgling in front of our tents, a grove of great pines standing sentinel, and far above the twinkling sky of night.

"Alas, poor Easterners, who wot not of this life," murmured Sally, after dinner, snuggling luxuriously on a pile of rugs before the camp-fire, weary but happy.

"Talk about fireworks," answered Bobbie, nursing a bruised foot, "Hooray for a glorious Fourth!"

VII.

BEAR AND FORBEAR

THE Bitter Root Grizzly is the toughest of bears. Every one knows that, and he lives in the roughest country. In fact life becomes generally superlative when hunting him. One is either going up, or going down, either travelling around boulders, which is abominable, or over slide rock, which is worse. Nothing is level nor easy. The mountains reveal their anatomy of rocks in the most hardened fashion with only here and there a patch of vegetation, scrub oak or stunted pine to cover them. A

pitiless country on horse and man, only the "roachback" thrives and the wing-footed goat.

For three days on the trail we had climbed and panted and climbed, varied only by a day's travel in a cedar swamp, a fearsome place where we were like midges in a glue pot. It took long to forget the despairing struggles of our laden animals as they stuck in the mire. Imagine taking a pleasure trip where groans and frightened horse squeals and visions of broken legs and necks danced in the air, when to stay mounted was one's only safety. Jerk, your horse misses footing on a comparatively firm tussock and flounders fetlock, knee, shoulder deep, plunging, rearing, squealing, jump, jerk, down—nose in the mire; up, at last something firmer, a clump of willow roots for forefeet, a tremendous bound—you on top all the time, and the hind ones are out, all four hoofs in a foot's space. An instant for breath, but the footing too frail for such weight, again you plunge in, dodging the low, snarled branches so heavily interlaced above

that at midday one travels in gloom; protecting one's knees from the army of trunks, getting out of the way of Daisy and Billy, worse off than you—and this going on for hours.

Ever we were toiling up, scaling bald ridges that left no cover for the imagination, mile after mile of chasm and rock showed death waiting but for an instant loss of poise, a single misstep of a horse.

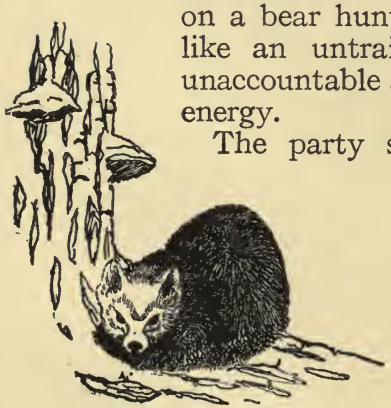
Oh, we had not lacked incident, and now we were enjoying the hiatus of some sweetly dull days in camp—a tiny strip of green, scant pasture for the horses, having called a halt. Uncompromisingly rose the rocky cliffs above, beside, beyond us.

Bobbie Tevis was fishing in the inevitably nearby stream.

I never could understand the fascination of holding an end of a stick while a foolish bit of string soaked in the water, but for Bobbie it has volumes of interest. The stick is glorified into a rod that cost a month's wage for a labouring man, and the paraphernalia of hooks, reels and flies takes more thought than my winter's wardrobe. Fortunately the

mountain trout are delicious. Sally was lazily putting on rubber boots preparatory to joining her liege. Nimrod was sketching the home of some calling-hares on a big landslide back of the camp.

The Pika are curious little creatures who store up their hay and winter supplies in the crevices of the rocks. When they are not disturbed they come out of their holes and sit in front sunning themselves and making little noises to each other, like a lot of Chicagoans on their doorsteps on a summer evening. They carry an astounding amount of stuff in great mouthfuls. I was ostensibly watching the cook jerk some venison which was hung on a forked stick in an improvised smoke-house of willow shoots; but the pungent smoke from the smouldering willow in no way disturbed my real occupation of being thoroughly, blissfully lazy. There was need to be, for soon we were to start on a bear hunt and this country is like an untrained guest, it is so unaccountable and demands so much energy.



The party separated about ten

o'clock. We wanted to be up in the likeliest place for bear in the late afternoon and it takes all day to get anywhere, for most of the travel, over merciless rocky steeps, has to be done on foot. Sally and I can go anywhere a horse can go, but the necessity for personal locomotion immediately puts us at a disadvantage.

Nimrod and I took Sommers and started off westerly. The Tevi and five guns of various makes and sizes (Bobbie believed in being ready for all emergencies) went with Lusk in the other direction. Of their luck Sally told at the campfire later—much later.

They did much hard travelling but saw nothing except a martin sitting in a black ball up a tree. About four o'clock afar off they heard shots and thought we must be firing, as there was no one else in the mountains.

"Should judge that was about two ridges over, wouldn't you? Wonder what they have struck?" Lusk said. "Two shots, that will hardly be a a bear."

"Now keep a sharp look out, Pet," Bobbie called excitedly," that may

scare something our way. Gee, I would like to get a chance—just a chance." Poor Bobbie with his Winchester, his Savage, his Mauser and not so much as a whisk of a tail had he seen.

"Better luck to-morrow, sure to see 'em soon," Lusk encouraged.

"Sh! Wasn't that something moving on that far ridge below?" Bobbie got out his glasses. "Yes, by jingo, it's a bear feeding on the blueberries. Say, that's great! Look at the way he stows those berries; puts his arm round a bush, and just shovels them in with his tongue," he handed the glasses to Sally.

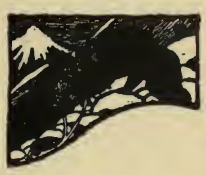
"I believe I'll try a shot, anyway—what do you say, Cap'n?"

"No use, too far. We must get nearer. We better go down on the other side of the ridge and come up behind him, providing he don't get frightened and travel."

This is Sally's excited narrative unadorned:

"If I live to be a hundred and fifty, I shall never see a day like this again. You know how awfully rough it is getting about. It really is no

horse country and not fit for humans to travel in. We left our horses about noon. We had been off them most of the time, anyway, and soon after we heard the shots, we saw two bears feeding on the mountain side about a mile away. In order to approach them we had to climb back on the ridge we had just left. We had trailed for an hour—my gun weighed over three hundred pounds by then, and the thing I breathe with had struck work, only got a good breath about one in twenty—when we sneaked out of cover and saw that the bears had hardly moved. It was a long shot, good three hundred yards, but Bobbie was not doing much better in the way of lungs, and he decided to risk the shot. The bullet struck one of the bears, and both of them sought the bushes. Bobbie got another shot into the wounded one, I think, before it dropped. Of course we started pell mell in pursuit. We slipped and fell and tore our hands and 'barked' our shins until we were about half way down the mountain where there was a little level place. That was my limit. Go further with-

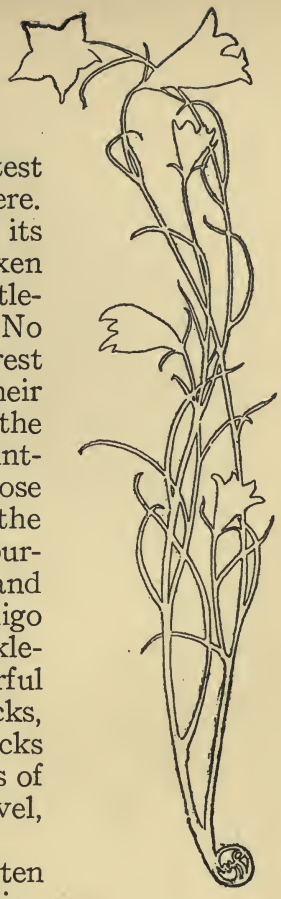


out rest, I could not. I hated dreadfully to be left, but of course Bobbie had to follow his bear and Cap'n's duty was with Bobbie. I couldn't think of letting him go alone, besides I could not endure the thought of that poor brute suffering. But when I saw them actually going off I found I had more strength than courage and toddled after them. Fortunately we found him within a hundred yards—and it was soon over."

Dear, enthusiastic, kind-hearted Bobbie, the role of conquering hero suited him so well, who will begrudge him that one trophy, meaning as it did the lure by which he gained rich treasure of renewed health and energy for the affairs that make the world go round?

But my tale was different and was not told that night.

Till noon Nimrod and I had climbed skilfully, managing to keep in the wooded torrent courses and thus use the horses. But now we were obliged to tie them and proceed on foot. No more the majestic yellow pine, the odorous balsam and spruce tempered the sun's rays.



Again the superlative, the hottest noons, the coldest nights, are here. No more would the yew bedeck its lateral branches with scarlet waxen berries, nor some blue-eyed myrtle-covered mound invite repose. No more would the delighted eye rest on orange scarlet beads, set in their heavy, yellow-ribbed leaves, nor the tropical blue ball that its long pointed lily leaves reveal; the flaming rose hips no more, nor the elder, nor the Oregon grape would hang its tiny purple clusters amid the leafy reds and yellows; no more the great, indigo fruit of the sarvis and the huckleberry, no more all the colourful growing things. Instead are rocks, rocks smooth, rocks rough, rocks big—whole ledges and mountains of them—rocks small as sifted gravel, the track of a snow slide.

For hours we toiled, heels often higher than head, until rebellion shrieked from every muscle. Three thousand feet up one obelisk, as many down, uncounted stretches on the ridges, up and down, rocks, rocks, not a patch of green level or large enough for a grave.

Toward sundown, gasping as we had done many times before, we dropped on a far outjutting ledge that split the heavens. Half of the whole wide earth seemed spread before us, valley after valley, range upon range waved away in purple shadows to the borderland of spirit. The mountain chill gathered as we looked and the warmth was frozen out of the sky. It was over time to be getting back to camp. My face and hands were scratched, shoes in ribbons, feet like boils, in fact not a spot worth mentioning without its scratch or bruise. There was small chance of my making camp that night if it had to be done on foot. This was not hunting. It was suicide.

Nimrod sent Sommers after the horses, which he judged were not more than a mile away, and designated a spot at the foot of the ridge where we would wait. A stream flowed through it, bordered by the usual strip of woods and we could see dimly a bald place which meant a tiny meadow, perhaps an acre in extent.

Sommers started off. All very well, but how was I to get there, or any-

where? The limit of endurance had been reached long ago. But when endurance gives out one still has the will and slowly I crawled and stumbled along. There was yet plenty of half-light and as soon as we reached the timber Nimrod saw many tracks of wild things. He could examine them at his leisure, as a five minutes' scramble meant a ten minutes' halt for me. Fortunately it was down hill, one could slide part of the time. What did a bruise or two more matter? Nimrod pointed out many rotten logs torn open by the paws of hungry black bears and grizzlies, seeking for their favourite summer relish, wood ants. He followed the fresh track of a mountain lion that was stalking a blacktail. He showed where the doe had stopped to feed, had taken alarm and bounded off. There were moose, lynx, yes, and elk and wolf tracks. This wooded, watered spot was evidently a favourite resort. It was uncanny in the deepening gloom to feel that the woods about were full of eyes and noses and claws and jaws.

At last, after infinite weariness,

through branches and brambles and logs we reached the stream. Of course, the little meadow of rank grass was on the *opposite* side. We crossed over on the rocks—more rocks, I had hoped to have seen the last of them. The inevitable slip occurred midstream and Nimrod fished me out, wet to the waist.

It was only one thing more. He made a tiny fire, Indian fashion. "Fool white man makes heap fire and gets away, Indian make little fire, stays close," and then proposed that he should *leave me*.

Does that strike a chill down your spine? No? Then you are not a woman, or have no imagination of how it feels to be left alone at dusk in the wilderness, untracked save by wolves and lions and bears and other "ravening monsters seeking whom they may devour."

Sommers should have arrived long before, something had undoubtedly happened to detain him. Just then we heard the sound of a distant shot, Sommers signalling for help. Nimrod must go. There was no alternative.

"I'll be back as soon as possible

with the horses," he said. "Fire one shot for answer." I did so, as he hastily collected some sticks for the fire and placing them beside me, ran off in the direction from which the shot came. I could see his form, black in the drab light, bobbing over the uneven meadow and disappearing into the woods. He was *gone*—and gone were all things comfortable and understood. I was marooned in the *unknown*. Can you feel the creepiness of it?

Nimrod had cleared a six-foot space in the tall marsh grass. I could not see above it as I crouched beside the fire that gave forth scarcely noticeable light or smoke—or heat either. How chilly it grew, how dark, how awfully silent! It was the silence of the tomb and I was afraid, exquisitely afraid, of—nothing.

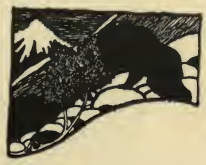
But my imagination soon found plenty of food. Sommers had been thrown and injured. Nimrod would never find him or he would break a leg in the dark and perish miserably from exposure. I would never see him again or any one. Some day strangers would find my bones and

identify me by a hat pin, no, my belt-buckle, unless the packrats carried it off. Here I would lie as uncounted as the salmon skeletons that strewed the bank, worthless remains of a bears' banquet.

I put a stick in the fire. It reverberated to China. I knew then the stillness and greyness that was before the Creation. I had lived cycles since Nimrod left, taking reality with him.

I started up, anything would be better than this. It was worse standing. I crouched again for a few more æons, straining every nerve to hear some sound of returning humanity. I could have heard a hair drop; then I did hear a sound as of a low body going through the grass, not twenty feet away. I froze with a vast new kind of terror, but it was a better brand than the last. Here at least might be action, and it was *real*, unmistakable. There again that low rustle coming. A mountain lion!

A twig snapped. No, it made too much noise, a faint swish, a very faint thud, thud, it had passed me and was going to the water. I heard



it pause and then the sound of an animal drinking. It was certainly a *bear*, nothing else makes so much noise.

I stood up, and not forty feet away was a Grizzly, his back toward me. He looked as big as an ox. My eyes, accustomed to the twilight, took in every detail—the gleam of his eye as his head turned, the slobber, slobber of his jaws as his deft paw raked into them some blueberries from the bank.

I do not know how long I stood there staring at him, absolutely motionless, but I know how a prisoner feels when waiting for the hangman. Then I began to think again.

Here was the chance to distinguish myself. Never was a stage set more dramatically. How the glory of it would ring down through the family annals, unaided, hand to hand, so to speak, encounter of a monster and the wonderful heroism of the woman, etc. Could I do it? for the sake of my descendants. I must try. My nerves were twitching like a frog's when the electrical current is turned on. Hardly able to control them enough,

I reached cautiously for the gun, raised it as best I could—how the thing wabbled and danced and circled.

The long day's strain had told, but, with a final supreme effort of will, I got it to my shoulder and fired. Then shut my eyes for an instant expecting the creature to seize me and devour.

Nothing happened! I do not believe I aimed, I never knew. The bear turned and started back toward me the way he had come, evidently on a runway, he looked as big as an elephant; already another cartridge was jerked in. I was calm now, I had done it and must fight. If he were wounded I knew there would be no quarter. I had the gun at shoulder and then for the first time the creature, who was now a mastodon, saw me. Its little eyes glared straight at me. I shall never forget them, and there we stood, transfixed.

For the fraction of a second he debated what to do and then turned slowly away. Now was the moment. There would have been no miss this

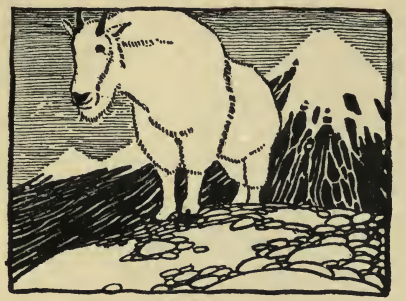
I LOWERED THE GUN AND LET HIM GO

time. A hunter knows when he will shoot true. I sighted along the barrel, a clear shot to the brain—it was so close—my finger on the trigger! Then I lowered the muzzle to the ground—and let him go. He had refused to injure me! Could I do less?

I watched him going off in the woods and sat down again amid the silence and the bears.

My one shot soon brought an answer, quite close, and had been most fortunate, for in the dark Nimrod had somewhat strayed. He found Sommers in a plight with three horses in a bog. At ten o'clock we got to camp—what few shreds were left of us—and heard the triumphant tale of the Tevi.

Bear and forbear; water and oil. Clearly, my story could not then be told.



VIII.

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT MOUNTAIN GOATS—BOBBIE'S STORY

IF Dante had ever hunted mountain goats, the world would have been richer by another canto of the Inferno. What an opportunity lost for those humorous gentlemen of the Inquisition and the Star Chamber: But this is the age of discovery.

No golden depas, alas! stood ready to offer libations to the victory-crowned when after the hardest hunt that imagination can picture, we returned to camp empty-handed; yet were we satisfied. Goats we

had seen, yes, three, and one we actually handled. This at least has the merit of orginality. I like to think of it. Instead of taking, we gave life and received the usual benefactor's reward. It happened this way:

For two nights Nimrod and I with Sommers had made a temporary camp in goat country. The wind blew, the snow descended, the streams glazed over, we fed on bacon and camp "sinkers" and had only a six-foot lean-to tent, eked out by boughs, to cover our beds. We had left everything in the main camp that we could possibly do without. Conditions could hardly be described as comfortable. I had thought rocks in themselves were bad enough, but ice-covered rocks—well, never mind.

The first night we lingered around the blessed fire, dreading the plunge into arctic darkness where our snow-covered beds gave chill greeting. The wind had changed after the lean-to was set up and before its tricks were discovered had sent the prying snow into every corner of our shelter.

Nimrod was discoursing learnedly upon the animal whose tracks we had seen that day. I like to get my Natural History by object lessons, when in Goat-land learn about goats.

"The *Oreamnos montanus* harms no one. He is a browser, and finds his food chiefly in the buds and twigs of the trees that creep up to his fastnesses. Such patches of forest like this are all through his range and it's here that you'll find him, between the timber line and the snowfields, which are his water supply." Nimrod tilted his hat still further on one side to shield his face from the driving snow.

"The goat clings to his habitat, and he is not a very migratory animal. The individual range is rather small if food and water be obtainable and no alarming smells assail his guide; but they sometimes swim rivers, and a salt lick is a delicacy for which they will risk a short sally from their fortress homes. You do not know of any about here, do you, Sommers?"

Sommers shook his head.

"Do goats ever make mistakes?" I asked.

"I suppose so. He thrives among cliffs that to us are impassable and his strength is wonderful, but I fancy now and then one gets in a tight place from which there is no retreat, and there must be accidents. They have a habit of grazing on the mountain sides where the grass first appears, the only grazing they do, beyond nibbling on small plants, and this habit perhaps is the cause of more mortality than any other, as many are killed each spring by snowslides."

"I once saw a goat that had made a mistake," said Sommers in his slow drawl, following up Nimrod's bait. He threw a stick of wood on the fire while we waited.

"They are so plumb sure of themselves, they go anywhere. This one had walked out on a pine tree stuck out from a cliff like that" (holding a forefinger out level from his hand). "The trunk was covered with snow and patches of ice and at the far end hung some moss. He went out all right to get it, but

going back was not so easy, even for a Billy; he slipped and got caught in a crotch and that's where I found him stuck fast and frozen, perhaps a month after.

"But it ain't usual. You can't never hurry a goat; you can pepper the ground about with shot, you can yell even, but you can't make him go faster than is safe. He puts every foot where it ought to go."

That night I dreamed of the goat that had made a mistake, suspended in mid-air, starving and freezing to death; and the next day we found another foolish goat. But it was a young one, and youth is the age for error.

About noon we came to a stretch of glare ice, over which we were proceeding with great caution, Sommers in the lead testing carefully, for death lays its traps here in the shape of pits where the snow has melted, but the thin, surface covering remains, presenting to the careless foot as solid a surface as the adjacent rock. We were crawling along this when a certain sound instantly stopped our progress. It

was a faint bleat, undoubtedly *goat.*

We soon discovered that a kid of the year had fallen prisoner into one of these pits. How long ago we could not tell, but it was still alive. We set about effecting a rescue. Sommers cautiously lowered himself into the basin, whereupon that ungrateful Billy chased him all around the hole, doing as much damage to shins and temper as his strength would permit until Sommers, using his belt as a collar, hauled the kicking, struggling beast to the edge where Nimrod was waiting to assist in getting him up. Never was a rescue more unpoetically performed and when in spite of himself the goat was landed safely on top, he returned thanks by drawing off and making so vicious a charge, his head with its little nubbins of horns well down, that Nimrod was knocked completely off his feet, and having thus laid low his benefactor the vindictive one took himself off over the ice with astonishing rapidity.

Watching his easy progress I wished for some of the rubber corns

THAT UNGRATEFUL BILLY STRAIGHTWAY MADE A VICIOUS CHARGE AT HIS BENEFACTOR

with which his feet are provided, for mine showed a determined propensity to seek the dull grey sky.

Enough is as good as more, sometimes much better. We struck out for the main camp next day, not loth to leave to the mountain goats, to the Excelsior youth, or any one else, this region of "snow and ice."

Again we found the sun, the huckleberries, camp comforts and Sally Tevis, all very delightful; and about midnight, appeared a human wreck that had to be pulled off its horse and assisted to the fire—Bobbie Tevis, bursting with the story of "his goat."

It took us far into the night to get it all, but what matter? Even then it was much easier told than done. Bobbie plunged into his narrative as soon as hot coffee had thawed his tongue.

"As you know, children, I desired goat more than righteousness; Sally was knocked out."

That lady interrupted:

"I wish I were a Mountain Goat,
I'd drink the glorious view;
And gladly skip from jag to jag;
Would you? would you?"

Humming the paraphrase before she could be suppressed. Sally had chosen to be flippant over goat, and for once had insisted upon remaining in the main camp.

"Cap'n and I started yesterday at daybreak, expecting to be back last night. I knew Pet would be all right during the day, with Charley to look after her. After riding several hours we left our horses picketed in a meadow and proceeded on foot with a light back pack. If one could only hunt goats on a horse! Well, we had climbed and slipped and stumbled over boulders, up precipices and slide rocks all day. I think I had never known anything like the ache of bones and general exhaustion, feet giving out, skin off the heels, left one crushed by a falling rock. The altitude bothered immensely, could hardly breathe going up hill, and it was all up or down, principally up—all this and not a sight of game. We had followed

the track of a big Billy only to have it apparently fall off the cliff; you know a goat would rather walk on the under side of a ledge any day.

"Cap'n wanted to make a detour of a half mile and come up under the cliff. It sounds easy but it would have taken us at least two hours to do it and hard work at every step, jumping from rock to rock, crawling along narrow ledges and dropping to the next below. A slip may mean a broken leg or worse; it's no place for clumsy, two-legged creatures, and—I was so tired, even then in the middle of the afternoon, that nothing but pride kept me from dropping in my tracks. Cap'n was done up too, I know, because whenever I called a halt for a few minutes to get wind he *sat down*—never knew him to do that before when on the trail. I believe he is like a horse, can go to sleep standing, and *once* he slipped out of his pack.

"Well, chance favoured us. We had not dragged ourselves along the ridge two hundred yards when I spied another track and we both

decided that the same Billy had made it, and a big fellow he must be. We worked on that trail for hours until it got too dark and I could not have gone another step anyway. To get back to camp was beyond me. There was not a single foot of level ground, to say nothing about a place big enough for a bed. It was very chilly way up there; we had only a blanket apiece. There seemed small prospects of fire and less of getting water, we were practically beyond timber line and streamland. I confess little Bobbie dropped in a heap too miserable to care, but one can't slump altogether, so in a few minutes opening my eyes I saw that Lusk had disappeared. Also in the dark I could make out the scraggly outlines of a scrub oak. Hobbling over to it I managed to break off some dead branches and started a tiny fire. How that living thing puts heart into one! Warmth, food and water, are all one really needs in this world for happiness—at times." Bobbie corrected himself hastily.

"I made sure that the tree was

firmly rooted, then sitting on the up-side I wrapped my legs around it and leaned back against a rock and tried to imagine being in a place from which I could not fall and where there was not constant danger from sliding rocks. The goat is a very slow moving animal and its protection is living in a region where no other four-foot wants to go, and as for two-foots, there are much easier ways of committing suicide." His eyes twinkled for an instant. "I don't know how long it was that I clung there with the sensation of being suspended in mid-air and only half aware of the surroundings, when I heard muffled noises, the slight clicking of one rock with another.

"What could it be? A goat certainly would not approach that fire, tiny as it was. It was just possible for a mountain lion to have strayed up so high. It might come near to the fire but it would not be so clumsy. Why, the Cap'n of course. My wits were so befogged that I had forgotten that there was any other human being in the world.

"He came very slowly, jumping

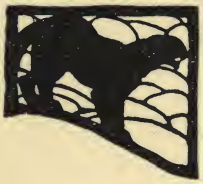
from rock to rock and trying to carry steadily the coffee pot, nearly full of melting snow. He put it on the fire and coaxed a blaze sufficiently to make coffee. The gift of David would not enable me to sing the adequate praise for that cheering cup. I stopped seeing things and began to feel real again. My crushed foot was bad, and tired—let that pass.

"The night was very cold. We had not covering enough for two, so we took turns sleeping and in feeding the fire. Cap'n found a dead tree near, which by careful management provided us with fuel. There was not level space enough to lie down in comfort without levelling the rocks. I was awfully worried about leaving the little girl but could not help it. At daylight when I attempted to rise, I really thought something was permanently wrong—never felt so queer in all my life, as though the whole machinery of the body was trying to run without oil, everything rubbed and grated together horribly, frozen and famished to boot. Lusk was

done up too. In this cheerful state we started the day's hunt. I did not care if I never saw a goat. In fact, I preferred not to see one. I hated the thought of it, but still since I was up in that rocky inferno to get a goat, I knew I had better finish up the business as I never wanted to do it again. So we staggered along to a little draw where we hoped to find water. On a spur in plain view was a big Billy. Cap'n said he was as big a one as he had ever seen, or that's what he meant. I believe what he said was a 'Whanger.'

"It was half a mile, but I did not see how I was ever going to reach him, so I wanted to try a shot anyway. But Cap'n wouldn't have it.

"You know how the mountains weather, there is the main ridge with smaller spurs shooting from it and a draw or gully between each spur. Well, this chap was on the second spur from us, at least two hours' work to get within gun range, providing he would stay there. Doggedly I followed Cap'n over the rocks and around the boulders and



up a nasty place where the rocks had split leaving a crack about two feet wide. A dead tree had gotten jammed into it upside down, and up this tree with the branches all going the wrong way, we crawled. It was as slippery as glass and the sharp branches jagged. A misstep would have sent us down into—well, I did not care to examine where. When we got up to the top—I had to pass up my rifle and pack, before I could manage it—we found ourselves at the head of a draw in a clump of trees, near a tiny stream. It was what the Cap'n had been looking for ever since daybreak, but he's such a mute sometimes, he gave me no hint.

We had breakfast and lay there for two hours. The sun grew stronger, the whole world changed to radiance and beauty. I moved from the fire and stretched out in the full glare of the sun, comfortably cooking, and feeling a delicious sense of rest. We stayed till eleven o'clock, when Lusk, who had climbed up a cliff to look around, motioned me to come. Being once more cap-

able, I sprang up and laboriously joined him. There was that Billy waiting for us—had not moved an inch apparently. A goat's vision is not extra good, he depends upon his nose, and the wind was blowing toward us. By reaching the next spur he would be within range. Hastening as much as possible, jumping from rock to rock, going up the face of a cliff that was almost straight up—could never have done it if I had given myself time to think—in about half an hour we crawled out on a ledge with only a draw of slide rock between us and the spur opposite where we had seen the goat. As we peered cautiously from behind a boulder, Cap'n suddenly pressed my head down out of sight. A little annoyed at this summary treatment I started to speak. He held up a finger warningly:

"'Lion' he whispered. Now if there is anything I wanted more than a goat it was a mountain lion. Greatly puzzled at the change of quarry I sneaked after Lusk. Every move now was as cautious and noiseless as we could make it. The

style of hunting was entirely changed. The puma has all his senses with him ready for business. At last stretched flat behind a rock I peeped over, and there within seventy-five yards of me, broadside on, a splendid shot, stood a magnificent tawny creature, with a big tail swaying from side to side. I could see the yellow gleam of his eye and I shall *never* forget that tail! He had been lying down, perhaps asleep on the sunny ledge and just at that instant had gotten up. He was not alarmed. Quickly I ducked down and raised my rifle over the rock and sighted along the barrel. Now what do you suppose happened?"

Bobbie's face was grim at the recollection and his eyes looked out reproachfully. "In that fraction of time the lion had moved two or three paces—and his head and shoulders were hidden behind a tree, just the tip of his nose was visible to the right of the tree. I stayed my finger on the trigger a second so as to let the shoulder be exposed again, when that cussed puma turned at right angles and by the meanest

trick ever played, kept himself completely covered by that tree, you know they are awfully thin edge on, until he entered a clump of bushes fifty feet away, and all that I ever saw of him was a yellow tail swaying from right to left of that tree. Oh, that mocking, tantalising tail!

Children! Can you imagine my feelings? I believe I would have fired into that tree if Lusk had not brought me to my senses. 'No! scare everything.'"

"That was hard luck," we all chorused. Bobbie squared his shoulders and went on—

"I looked for the goat. Of course, it was gone too. We started to get across the slide in pursuit. It was awfully loose; wouldn't hold at all. Down, down we slipped, with an awful rattle of falling stones below, and above came pelting a regular landslide, and we in the middle of it. When we finally brought up, we were a quarter of a mile below the goat spur. We had missed it altogether, way above us, and I was thankful not to go pounding down to the chasm below, with many of

the rocks we had dislodged. Hugging a friendly tree I decided again I had enough of goat. About the lion I would not even think. Evidently the Angel of the Wild Things was having a busy day. The competition was too great. Lusk had picked himself up and was scanning the country with a glass.

"Goat"—he said, handing me the glasses and motioning upward. I could have thrown them at him, but, of course, looked, and there was that old goat strolling around the other side of the spur. I picked up my gun. Climb that mountain I would not. It was over two hundred yards in a straight line, but I would have a shot at least. Without moving, one leg gripped around a sapling, I took free-hand aim and fired. The creature jumped and lay down. It was no use trying again, couldn't see him. Cap'n started up the base of the next spur which was quite close. I let him go alone, not even then would I follow. In about half an hour I saw him waving his arms wildly for me to come. Having gotten my wind, I lashed my flicker-

ing enthusiasm and toiled up a wooded spur, on my head half the time.

"Well, I finished the goat." Bobbie glanced down for a moment. "I'll spare you the details, but when he lay down finally, his precious head was hanging over the cliff. If he fell it would be smashed to bits. When we got to him he was too heavy for us to move—an enormous fellow. I tied my belt around his hind leg and secured it to a sapling. We had an awful time skinning out the head and separating it from the body; our strength was spent; but we managed it at last, and just in time, for as we pulled it to a safe place, the sapling gave way.

"'Look out!' Cap'n yelled, and I dodged as the carcass, belt, tree and all, went slipping over the edge, struck about a hundred feet below and went, rolling, plunging, masses of flying rock with it, down—nearly a mile below, and when we got to it at sunset, I doubt if there was a whole bone in its body. It was dark when we staggered to the meadow two or three miles farther

on, where we had picketed our horses yesterday.

"I don't know how I ever sat that horse, and this foot will lay me up for a while, but look, Petty, isn't that a head? Bet it is a record breaker!"

Alas! Even as Bobbie enthused, he sighed—poor human Tevis—another victim of the unattainable.

"I wonder," he said, "if, when I look at it, I shall *always* see the waving of that yellow tail from side to side behind a tree—the puma that I *did not get!*"

IX.

A JACK RABBIT DANCE AND THE FANTAIL GHOST

RUNNING through the whole of our trip, as silver in a brocade, were allusions to the "fantail" —a small deer of quite distinct species. Nimrod, the scientist, pricked up his ears at each hint.

"It has not been conclusively proven that the "fantail" exists. Hunters' stories affirm it. An isolated bone or two, but never a complete skeleton, has been produced. The fragments I have seen might have

been the young of black- or white-tail."

Preserving an open mind he took copious notes from Cap'n and Sommers.

"I ain't never killed one," confessed Cap'n, "but they are sure here, seen their tracks often. It's narrower than a fawn. Once I followed one and came on it in the dusk, about the size of a greyhound, only shorter of course, a full grown adult with small horns. No, it was not a fawn, too clean limbed and tight made—" and so on.

Nimrod put it all down in his journal. "Perhaps," he said: and travelled miles to see a track the Captain assured him was "fantail."

"It may be," he announced, after measuring it carefully fore and aft and amidships and taking its photograph. "How I would like to be sure! A good specimen settling the matter would be worth while." His scientific acquisitiveness was fully aroused.

One morning we started, as we had daily, to hunt for what we could find. Nimrod read many tales of the wild for me. Elk had bedded here last

night, a bear had rubbed the bark off that tree, scratching his back, a close inspection disclosed some hairs sticking to it; black bear, brown or grizzly, small or large, which way going, all this he knew at a glance, arriving at the result by knowledge and deduction.

At last on a sun-baked hillside we dropped to rest in a huckleberry patch, wonderful child of a forest fire. Never in the hot-houses of Midas have I seen such berries as nature provides here for the taking. Acres of huckleberries as big as one's thumb, juicy and sweet, hanging in luscious luxuriance, sharp contrast to the spiny manzanita and rocky arid stretches. While they last the bears gorge themselves, and we gorged ourselves without the effort even of rising. To be Irish—although we were lying down, we were practically sitting up, the hillside was so steep. I felt like the lazy man of Bagdad who reclined under a fig tree, all his life, nourished by the fruit that dropped into his mouth.

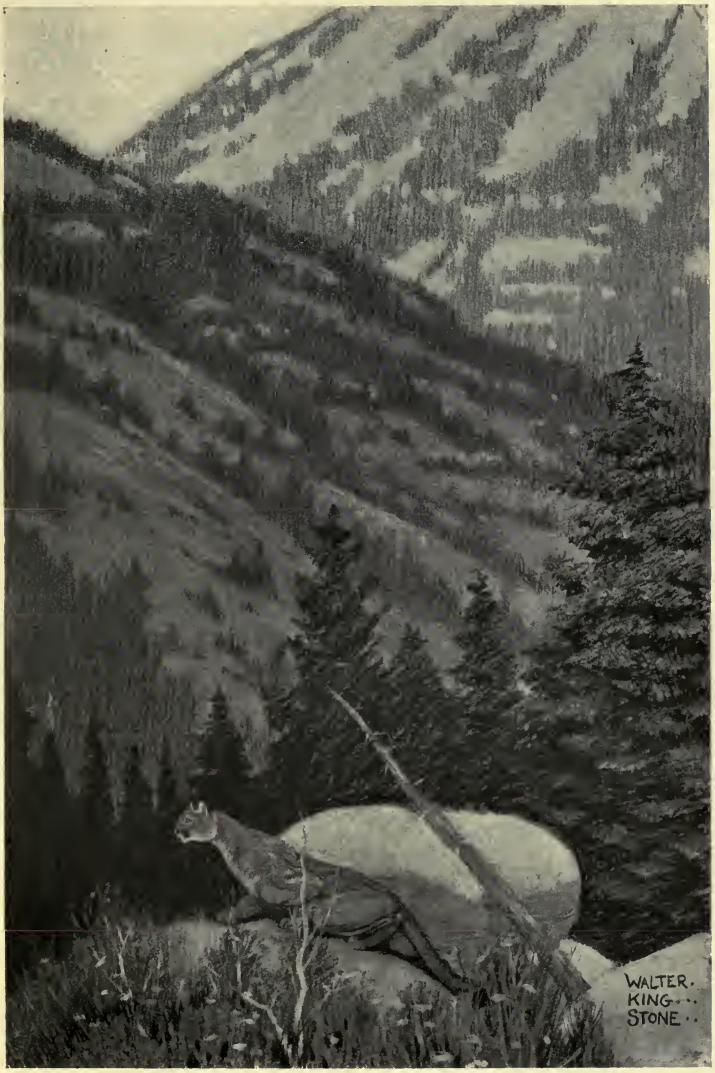
Nimrod's keen eye was scanning an opposite ridge not two hundred

yards away. The ridges follow one another like the teeth of a comb and relatively as close. Suddenly he grabbed his field glasses and gazed excitedly.

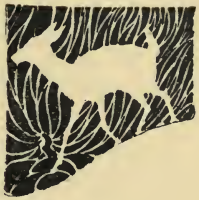
"Look, what do you see there? *There*, beside that stump," locating the spot with the glasses. I saw a small deer, partly hidden by bushes.

"Fantail?" I whispered breathlessly, knowing what it would mean to Nimrod if he could really see one. But even as I said it, came a disgusted "pshaw," from him as the cause came into view around a boulder, a blacktail doe. The little one sprang up and joined his mother, followed by a second fawn. It was a pretty sight to see them moving leisurely along unalarmed, the wind was blowing toward us. With ear and tail and leg lazily they fought the deer flies. Undoubtedly the mother was making for some spot she knew, some sylvan draw in which to pass the heated midday hours. In time the family group drifted out of sight over the ridge into a spot I was to know.

Then was enacted a drama of the



A TAWNY SHADOW CLOSE AGAINST THE RED EARTH



mountains that is rarely seen, even by old guides, and as events proved, we were by no means the passive spectators we thought. Lying supinely on a hillside seems a good way to avoid incident, but if you had seen what we did, you would have done what we did, doubtless, with consequences as far reaching.

Perhaps the sun had climbed toward noon long enough for the millions of time tellers to have ticked off the quarter-hour when on the same hillside opposite, a tawny shadow close against the red earth moved swiftly, nose to the ground. We never stirred, the gun and the camera remained undisturbed, so absorbed were we watching that incarnate death tracking its prey. I had never seen a puma in broad daylight outside of a cage, and now as that great cat stealthily crawled along, disappearing in the berry patches, and out again, I thrilled with the by-gone delightful horror of "Arabian Nights!"

"He is following the blacktail trail," Nimrod whispered. "It is late in the day for him to be hunting." Cautiously we sat up among the

bushes, never taking eyes off that swiftly sneaking form, that wove back and forth. It paused where the fawns had joined on and then followed faster than before; soon it was over the ridge.

"Will he catch her?" I asked, jumping up.

"Not likely, but they do sometimes," was the answer as with one accord we started to follow. It meant a hard scramble to get over there and we had not gone far when the doe came running back over the ridge. Evidently frightened by the lion, she had hidden her young and was leading him away from them as well as trying to save herself.

Alas! she saw us now in full view, and turned her course. She did not know that we could be trusted. She lost ground by it and I thought I got one glimpse of a yellow pursuer drawing near. Hurry as fast as we could, it was nearly half an hour before we got to the place where the blacktail had turned and the lion track showed, not on the trail, but running alongside. We followed some distance. It had been a successful

hunt for the tawny one, and we found the poor quarry in its death agony. The lion of course had removed himself at our approach. He could afford to leave the meal, it would wait for him. It was but humane to put a bullet where it would speed oblivion to the cruelly wounded deer. That bullet of mercy, mark it well, we had trouble enough with it and with another. It would seem that innocence and good intentions must be protected, but vice, expecting punishment, takes care of its own.

We searched long for the little blacktail, but they were successfully hidden. Nimrod calmed my distress for their motherless, unprotected condition by saying that they were big enough to be weaned and there was a good chance of them being able to feed themselves if the Angel of the Wild Things would protect them from enemies. I knew that a very young fawn would probably starve to death on the spot where it dropped, when the mother gave the signal to freeze—waiting, waiting for its protector's little grunt of release.

On the way back to camp Nimrod

spied a baby rabbit trying to hide. He was such a dear little fellow that Nimrod, wishing to have him pose for a picture, dexterously dropped a hat over him, and in order not to hurt his model, replaced the hat with the bunny inside, and for several hours that astonished rabbit travelled in safety on the top of a curly head. He was then put on the ground by the side of our tent with the lid of a 'telescope' over him. He had plenty of air and grass to feed on till morning.

The Tevi crawled back in time for dinner. "Worn to a frazzle" was Sally's comment.

To one who has never answered the call of the Red Gods, how can the all-pervading friendliness of the camp fire be described? It is intimate, it is mystical, it is soul-enveloping; or it is merely cheering, according to one's mood. It can be perverse and disagreeable, but it is always necessary, the very heart of camp life. Perhaps we all were fire worshippers once. I love it best as the comfortable open-house friend between dinner and bed. Then

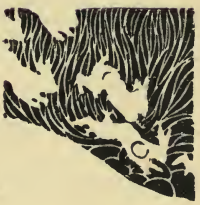
stories float over it, even as mist on the meadows. It is the birthplace of fancy, the cradle of memory.

A comfortable group was revealed by its glow this night.

Drawn on by deft questions from Nimrod the Cap'n was spinning one of his yarns about the mysterious "fantail." Bobbie was cleaning a gun, Sally curled up near him on a rug like a contented kitten. Sommers sat on his feet, whittling a stick.

"If you once caught sight of its tail, you'd know—the critter spreads it out wide like—" the Cap'n stopped as a sound, curious yet quite audible, broke in upon his speech.

We all sat still listening. Thump—thump—silence. Then thump—thump—. It had a hollow metallic sound, unusual for the woods. What could it be? Light broke across Nimrod's face. He began to laugh, silently. "It's that baby rabbit I got on the trail to-day," he said softly, so as not to disturb the noise-maker.



The 'telescope,' a good-sized case for carrying clothes, was made of leatheroid, and acted as a sounding board. "If there are any rabbits

within hearing they will come. The little fellow is thumping for them. It's the rabbit way of calling for help," said Nimrod. "There, did you see that? Keep quiet, and don't move."

A big rabbit had dashed within the circle of the fire-light and disappeared into the darkness. In a few minutes another flitted in and out of sight, another and another, thump—thump—could be heard from different parts of the forest.

"They are gathering," Nimrod whispered, "must be a dozen at least."

Bobbie went into his tent and came out with a lighted acetylene lantern. With this he advanced into the forest cautiously, the lantern casting a long cone of light as he turned it slowly, searching. The sounds ceased. He sat down on a root. We all quietly joined him.

The rabbits, startled at first by the strange light, were quiet, also watching. Then one bold chap, moved by curiosity, hopped cautiously near; others followed. No harm resulting, he advanced still nearer, and leaped

HIPPITY HOP, AROUND AND AROUND

across the patch of lighted ground. One, a dozen rabbits, big and little, followed him. Circling, he came back again and again, each time nearer to the queer little sun. What he did others did, in augmenting numbers until we counted twenty playing the game of "Follow the Leader." It was a weird sight—a Rabbit Shadow Dance. Hop hop, hippity, hop, backwards and forth and around went the shadows—a fairy scene. Nimrod slipped away to get his camera. The rabbits hardly noticed him, so interested were they in their game.

In every group there is always a foolhardy one and curiosity is a strong motive power, even in rabbits. One little fellow began to examine the camera and actually sat on top as though it were a stump. Bobbie could not resist putting out his hand and seizing the rabbit by the ears. It set up a sharp squealing. At the same moment a venturesome Jack came so close to the lamp in his investigations that he burned his nose and sprang back.

Instantly every rabbit disappeared. Warned of the danger by their

companion's squeals, their former fears returned. Bobbie, seeing his mistake, had at once released the captive, but the woods remained as silent as a theatre after the show is over. For long we sat quiet hoping for a return of our entertainers, but the charm was broken, the lamp died out, and again only the noisy silence, the starlit darkness, the camp-fire message.

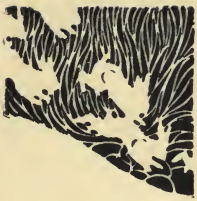
The next morning we made an early start, animated by the Cap'n's assurance that he might show us "fantail," as he had "seen fresh tracks" the night before. Also he promised that I could ride all the way; my lion-blacktail pursuit had made this imperative.

Oh, land of steeps and rocks, many a sacrifice of aches and pains you have accepted from me! But to-day it offered one of its caresses, and like all things beautiful and rare, it bestowed its blessing upon us in full measure. Blithely, in the crisp fragrant air of early sunlight, we followed a well-defined game trail bordering leisurely a tumbling inconsequent rill that drew its life from

ONE ACTUALLY SAT ON TOP OF THE CAMERA

this wooded ravine. Once we floundered in a willow bog; but it was a passing frown not indicative of temper. Already the way was smiling, masses of flaming Indian cup, and the fairy blue bell, the aristocratic lupin in full lilac bloom, and wealth of feathery grasses for the open glades, while in the leafy gloom was spread a carpet of pine needles on which the willing partridge vine had woven a pattern of shining green, pailletted with coral, and strange coloured beads on brilliant red and purple stems welcomed our passing.

Three miles of this when the Cap'n made a signal to dismount. I looked disapproving surprise which brought in response a hitch of the shoulder, a jerk of the head, which indicated that it was not far to walk. Silently he tied the horses and made his way, through a thicket, with elaborate care to avoid noise, I followed, hardly breathing, and Nimrod brought up as rear guard. His eyes had unusual brightness. Perhaps he was on the edge of solving a long dispute between hunters and scientists. It was understood that if possible I was to



secure a specimen of "fantail," a proper sacrifice for the advancement of knowledge.

After infinite precaution, wriggling past branches, avoiding a step on twig, dead leaf or any noise maker, we arrived at a spot that is deep graven in my memory. It was a small open basin, perhaps a hundred yards in diameter, surrounded by a ring of dense second-growth saplings. The marks of a forest fire were everywhere present in the charred sticks heaped one on the other, making travel through it impossible, combined as it was, with tall marsh grass and bog foundation. The tree circle was interrupted only at the spot, where we were. Here was salt lick, a forty-foot patch of ground where the earth was mixed with strong alkali. These are not uncommon in the mountains and invariably are the resorts of animals when instinct sends them seeking for salines. A game trail led through this one and many tracks showed its popularity.

The Cap'n with a dramatic gesture pointed to the ground and Nimrod was on his knees at once examining

a dainty deer track. It was fresh, not more than two hours old, and there were staler tracks of the same animal, probably made yesterday, showing that it was staying in this locality.

Nimrod was full of suppressed excitement. My lips formed the magic word—"fantail?" and the answering nod expressed—"I really begin to think so!"

Then he pointed to another set of tracks, a little smaller, of same type and wrote on his note book for me to see, "May be buck and doe."

To track them was out of the question, I was too lame, so making ourselves as comfortable as possible we prepared to wait for the return of the track-makers. They would almost surely come back, but possibly not for several hours, toward evening. The Cap'n went back to the horses, for the cold lunch provided against such a contingency, and Nimrod explored the adjacent woods, always silently and within sight.

In the woods there are no electric bells with someone at the other end in case of emergency, and as you

know if you have read these confessions, I would rather face a bear any day than be left alone.

It was a sweet time; this still hunting was agreeably restful. Idly, I reclined on the top of some thick bushes, an old trick as the ground gets uncomfortably hard. The bush gives somewhat and one has a springy seat. Sage brush makes an ideal sofa, but this stunted willow was not bad. The hours wore on. Nimrod ceased exploring and took to scribbling. His efforts enriched the present for me at least:

A SONG OF THE WEST

"A meadow lark sang as the sun went down,
He sang in the dying glow,
He stirred up my heart with his artless art
And his song of the long ago.

"He sang me a song of the West, the West,
He set all my feelings aglow,
He brought back the days of my youth with his song—
His song of the long ago.

"A coyote howled when the night was gone,
A voice on the wind from the East;

My horse turned his head from the place
where he fed,
He heard but a hated beast.

But he sang *me* a song of the West,
the West, etc.

"A Sioux in his tepee away in the night
Drummed a chant of the 'Buffalo days'
Till the men with me swore at the savage
uproar
And cursed him, his drum and his race.

But he sang *me* a song of the West,
the West, etc.

"The moon in the morn was still in the sky
But the mountains in day were aglow,
And the girl by my side, the blue-eyed, my
bride,
Sang, but not of the long ago.

"She sang me a song of the West, the West,
Swept sorrow and worry away;
She stirred up my heart with her tuneful
art
And her song of the strong to-day."

Perhaps for a moment we may have forgotten the "fantail," but the Cap'n had not. His whole attitude stiffened in attention and so did ours. I could not hear nor see a thing new, but Nimrod evidently did. His breath was coming fast and my heart began to thump to suffocation. It must be

"fantail" and I would have to shoot. On me depended the solution of the "fantail" puzzle.

The Cap'n passed over the gun and motioned across the little basin. I was too short to see over the tall marsh grass in the foreground. In desperation I found precarious footing on a root which brought me on a level with their eyes, and looking through the branches of an aggravating willow bush that was in the way, I saw two ears facing me. One flicked a fly off. It was a hundred yards fully, and the light was failing. The ears moved, turned and I could guess where the body was.

"Shoot—it's going," whispered the Cap'n.

Another instant, and the illusive "fantail" would be again a myth. I took the desperate chance and aimed where his shoulders ought to be. The animal jumped, and gave one glimpse of itself going over a log.

"It is hit" cried the Cap'n. I began to weep. It was the first time I had fired at a live thing without having a sure shot. The four victims of my pride had never suffered. Now I

had wounded that dainty little creature that could harm no one—and it had gotten away. To track it in that night in the down timber, was impossible.

"Perhaps you did not hit it," consoled Nimrod. But the Cap'n, not comprehending and also seeking to console, insisted that I had. "We'll get him in the morning."

"What did it look like," I enquired of Nimrod, whereupon that gentleman gave me a curious glance.

"You will see to-morrow, perhaps," and changed the subject.

Oh! ghost of the Fantail! How it haunted me that night! If it had been trained by the Society for Psychical Research it could not have done its work better. All night I kept vigil and at daybreak we were back at the place where it had stood on the opposite side of the basin. The ground was hard and yielded no evidence. For a long time we cast about for some sign. It seemed hopeless, but I would not give up. Every leaf and tiny pebble was searched.

Had we seen anything last night?

Had I really fired at something flesh and blood, or was it a spook? Yes—a tiny drop of blood showed brown on a leaf.

Then began a wonderful exhibition of trailing on the part of Nimrod and Cap'n. They found the track, lost it repeatedly, circled as does a dog, got it again, or else a pin point of blood on leaf or stone or gravel. It led across the ravine up the steep bare hillside; once after a tiresome search we found where it had lain for the night. Nimrod after close study diagnosed the injury as a "broken leg." Shuddering and sick I urged haste, but that was futile. There was no blood now, there never had been much, blindly we selected a game trail where we saw many tracks of a big deer and a lion track too, but not the small one we wanted. Eight hours had passed in unravelling the puzzle. I was exhausted as usual, but could not give up. Nimrod seemed about to speak, when far ahead on the trail I saw a small deer.

The Cap'n whispered "Aim sure."

At last the "fantail"; up flew the

gun. "It looks like a fawn," I demurred. It started to go on three legs and I hesitated no longer. The animal shot in the air, turned a complete somersault and rolled a hundred yards down the mountain before a boulder stopped it, quite dead. I am sure the Cap'n never tells this story.

Instead of hurrying toward it, Nimrod sat down to rest. He answered my amazed look by—

"That 'fantail' is a blacktail fawn. Suspected it last night, but its track was peculiar and the Cap'n was so sure. I could not see it well last night, and its being alone without the mother was misleading."

"Do you know where you are?" he added—I shook my head, too chagrined for casual matters.

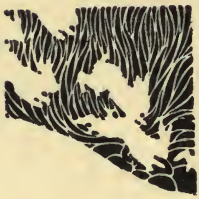
"Up there is the ridge where the lion killed that blacktail doe. Of course the fawns would hang around in the locality."

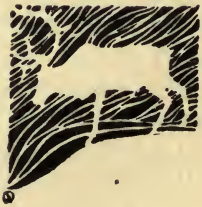
"But the other?" I faltered.

"Lion got it! I passed the remains this morning but steered you away. Your fawn was wounded, it was better to finish——"

I stopped him, not wishing to hear more. Trusting to the wisdom of another, inspired by a desire to further science, I had tortured and killed that motherless little creature! No wonder the name of "fantail" disappeared from the camp circle and I never raised a gun again that trip or for years and never but once since at a living mark.

Treacherous "fantail," illusive, unproven still, protected by Saint Hubert, you may roam the hills in safety, you may enshroud yourself in mystery, while retribution works its way with me.





X.

A SINEW OF THE LAW DISPLAYED

THAT was the situation. We had ended the misery of a doe wounded to death by a mountain lion, we had killed a blacktail fawn by mistake for a "fantail." Both crimes punishable by law, yet perpetrated from the best of motives and by one who believes deeply in game protection.

Three days after the tragedy related, two men rode into the camp. They poked about as though they had right to do so, and my growing indignation had almost produced

speech when the elder of the two, putting a hand suggestively on the doe's skull which Nimrod at that moment was sketching, remarked:

"Are you the fellow who makes pictures of animals and writes about them? Well, Mr. Nimrod, you are my man, you are under arrest! I reckon that skull and this fawn skin will do. My name is Dean." He displayed a game-warden's badge with an air of triumph.

Immediately there was a great hubbub in camp. Nimrod arrested for killing a doe and a fawn, Nimrod who had not fired a gun the whole trip! In vain I endeavoured to explain that mine the killing, mine the punishment. Nimrod would not permit it. He assumed the blame, but described to Dean the situation; of no avail.

"I ain't made an arrest this summer and I'm about due to hold down my job. I've got a good case, plenty of proof—Mackenzie here will swear to it. And it will do me good, show my boss I am busy."

With insolent frankness he said this, and the look of the man gave

no hope that he would relent. Dean intended to take his prisoner away immediately. It required much persuasion, and a bond to keep Nimrod with us under pledge to appear at Garver to stand trial within forty-eight hours.

There is an old saying: One never knows the law until one breaks it. Here was I a criminal, though with no such intent, and worst of all not allowed to bear my own punishment.

Thus was our trip broken up and by five o'clock next morning our gloomy party began a forced march in order to make Garver in time. One hundred miles in two days is not possible with a pack-train. Leaving Sommers and Charley to bring it as fast as they could, the Cap'n, the Tevi and the criminals hurried ahead, our horses at a trot over logs, bogs, wasps' nests, jolt, jolt, an awful day's travel. We ate a cold dinner, with the exception of coffee, and in the small hours got into Pine Cone Lodge, more dead than alive. Forty miles without a trail, part of it in a snow-storm that rendered the footing most precarious.

One of the horses had to be shot afterward. The cold was of the penetrating, damp variety. The next day we made the sixty-odd miles in a carry-all, over a combination of ruts and holes and "corduroy" which was termed a road.

Oh shades of the Pioneer Mothers! For you, such may have been all in the day's work—but I am not complaining, did you think I was? No, only giving a hint of what it is like to be caught in the toils of error. I cannot pretend to be a heroine, and did not enjoy it.

The Cap'n was undeniably perturbed. This arrest might seriously hurt his business, if followed by conviction. He had sent a call among the mountains for a rally of his friends at Garver, with what result you shall see.

"All I want is fair play" he said. "Dean is a bad character. Has killed two men and been in the 'Pen.' But he's got a pull that made him game warden and he wants to show them what he can do. And he ain't friendly to me, or anybody, as I know of."

Our first business in the morning was to secure counsel, one Hiram Barker. Our second, to seek with a purpose the county newspaper office; but news was scarce, it was too good a story and the editor, who was also owner as well as printer and devil, smiled at us deprecatingly and wrote and wrote and wrote, creating a wonderful fabric with enough woof of truth to make it hold together. Wizard Fantail, are you not yet avenged?

As we were walking down the main street in the brilliant shimmering sunshine, Sally exclaimed: "Oh, look! isn't that Mr. Barker with a new suit on, 'ready made' from Chicago and a b'iled shirt?"

"Yes," Nimrod affirmed. "They say that he always gets a new suit of clothes when he is retained on a case. The boys call it his law suit. We left him in Swan's Emporium an hour ago when Mrs. Nimrod acquired the affair she is wearing that makes her look like a peony!" This was a thoroughly reproachable shirtwaist of shrimp pink flannel; mine was in tatters and the luggage fifty miles away.

Sally took up the Barker theme. "Now he is a flourishing attorney, one day in the week in his office. This morning in overalls and a flannel shirt he was a hard-working farmer. Has a ranch fifty miles below here, you say? His trousers are *over* his boots and he has a cigar instead of a quid in his mouth. These are the final touches. The butterfly has burst forth."

"More like a magpie. Wait till you hear him this afternoon." Nimrod looked at his watch. It was nearing two o'clock. Hiram Barker, attorney-at-law, on seeing the group changed his course and bowing ceremoniously to the ladies addressed his client.

"I see the jedge is makin' for the court room and Mister Dean is waitin' for him on the steps. He ain't got no call to be friendly with the jedge jest now." Then giving himself a little mental shake he slipped out of his Western vernacular as he had out of his rancher's clothes, and his speech became as ready made as his attire.

"Shall we proceed to the court

room? Judge Neal is punctual. I find that the prosecution has a few exhibits." He conversed in a low tone with Nimrod until the main business block of the town was reached. It was two story, of brick, the ground floor divided into stores, the second floor devoted to several offices and the "town hall." Within its bare, dirty, whitewashed walls had transpired most of the excitements of Garver. Its dances, its political meetings, its theatricals, its public functions and its trials. On gala occasions, flags and greens may have draped its ugliness, to-day there was not one spot of beauty upon which the repelled eye could rest. High, narrow windows, dirty and bare of shades, admitted the August's sun full heat upon a deal table at one end, a dozen wooden chairs grouped near it and two rows of heavy wooden benches ranging back from it. A glass transom, broken at some more jovial session had been mended with brown paper, and the insignia of winter, a cast-iron pot-bellied stove, had been disjointed by one pipe length, the two

severed ends gaping mute testimony to the room's neglect.

The Tevi sat on one of the front benches, with me. Nimrod upon another bench with the sheriff, the front of a group of men. Facing us, behind the deal table on a revolving chair sat the particular branch of Uncle Sam's tree of justice who was to preside over our fate.

Judge Neal was a wizened, sandy-haired old man with kindly twinkling eyes. He wore a small round felt hat, which neither Sally's presence nor mine had dislodged, a crumpled stiff shirt front and a white cotton handkerchief in lieu of a collar. Being lame, a heavy walking stick reposed upon the table. It served as a paper weight, and later, when proceedings grew lively, as a gavel.

Dean was on one side of him, Barker on the other. The sun poured down upon them, the flies buzzed noisily, the heat was suffocating.

One could not but contrast the general discomfort and ugliness, and the fires of greed and hate and murder lurking near, with the days

before, under God's roof where the soul could feel its eternal beauty.

At five minutes past two, the little mild-mannered judge laid aside his hat, a signal that he had assumed the rôle of "yer honour" and in a rough and ready way the wheels of justice started. A jury of six was impanelled. Dean's first question to each, "Are you a Woodman?" met with an invariable "Yes." Then on one pretext or another he endeavoured to exclude the man as juror. I was puzzled at this until Bobbie whispered:

"Cap'n is a Woodman and they have all rallied to help him out. He's evidently popular."

"What is a Woodman?"

"One who belongs to a semi-secret organization out here. If Nimrod loses, it will reflect on Cap'n and hurt his business. Look at Dean, he's furious. The whole six are Woodmen. He can't help it."

The case proceeded quietly. The prosecution presented its charges, that of killing doe and fawn. The judge fussed with his papers. Mackenzie was called as witness. He tes-

tified to seeing a dead fawn skin with a bullet hole in it and a hornless skull lying in our camp. Here the prosecution and the defence, namely Dean and Barker, fell to wrangling. It finished with the following scene.

Barker to Dean. "Perhaps the learned gentleman for the prosecution will explain for the benefit of the Court the difference between a bear's skull and a doe's skull."

Dean. "It is not necessary, unless the learned gentleman who asked the question, needs coaching."

Barker. "I should like to ask if there is as much difference as between a doe's skull and a *human* skull."

Dean, darting a fiery glance at him, but controlling himself: "The gentleman is out of order, your Honour."

The judge ruled that he was and thumped the stick upon the table twice for no apparent reason, but I began to perceive a subtle change in the attitude of the men about us. The air was becoming electric. I recalled that Dean had killed a man, Cortwright two years before, in a livery stable at Golden, shot him

in the back, and that still another murder was attributed to him.

Barker (changing his tack). "The learned gentleman has not spent all his time in the mountains? He has lived in a town—Golden, perhaps?"

Dean (savagely). "Yes, I lived at Golden. What's that got to do with the case?"

Barker (persuasively). "*Perhaps* he kept a livery stable there—about two years ago?"

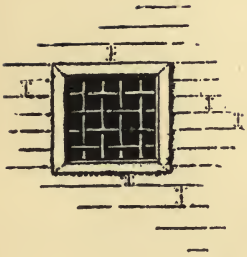
Dean (defiantly, squaring toward his tormentor—the witness, the case in hand was forgotten). "Yes, I kept a livery stable two years ago. What is that to *you?*"

Every man now was sitting on the edge of his seat. One juror who was immediately back of Dean fastened his eyes on that man's right arm and gathered himself together as a cat does before a spring. Still, I did not quite comprehend.

Barker (in a smooth voice). "And left it for good reasons?"

Dean (in a tone not pleasant to hear). "And left it for good reasons."

Barker. "Did you ever hear of a man named Cortwright?"



Dean. "To hell with you, you infernal scoundrel," and suddenly a dozen things happened. Dean's hand flew to his right hip pocket. The juror from behind pounced on him and knocked him to the floor, every man was on his feet, the judge's stick came down on the table. "Order—order in the Court."

The sheriff sprang forward, revolver in hand, Dean regained his feet, cursing under his breath. Again the judge's gavel-cane descended sonorously and his piping voice commanded "*Order*, or the sheriff must do his duty."

Dean, his face ashy pale, stood shaking his head like a lion at bay; an instant's intense silence, then with a visible effort he regained self-control.

Dean. "I beg your Honour's pardon. The gentleman of the defence is a white-livered hell-hound. He is trying to derogate the character of the counsel for the prosecution."

Barker attempted to speak. The Judge checked him.

"Gentlemen will please lay all

weapons on the table—Sheriff!" The sheriff made the rounds and collected four revolvers. The judge, who had also risen in the excitement, resumed his seat of justice. With a strong undercurrent of bad blood which might yet be spilled, the case proceeded. Dean made his points, a clever fabric, the dead fawn, the hornless skull, the dead doe on the mountain, evidently devoured by Lion *afterwards*, and much extraneous confusing detail.

Barker broke down the case by presenting the truth as he saw it. The counsel for the prosecution summed up briefly and then Barker arose. It was his golden hour. For twenty-five minutes by the watch he let off what Nimrod afterwards called "his natural gas."

He began slowly:

"Yer Honour, gentlemen of the jury. You have been gathered here from your tasks of honourable employment to witness a stupendous piece of wilful persecution. This monumental and egregious error has been perpertrated by one who by his noble office should ever

uphold as on the shoulders of the populace the worthy laws of this magnificent State of Idaho. (He gathered breath) Idaho, the brightest gem in our great nation's diadem.

"What man among you—what man among you, I say, would be so blind to the calls of our divine Columbia to let for a single fraction of time the shadow of suspicion, after listening to the evidence here shown to-day, that the stranger at our doors could have been guilty of such conduct as he has herewith been charged. What man so lost to the powers of reason, whereby he shows his divine origin, and supremacy over the lower animals" —his voice rose in crescendo and with a grand action his right arm shot up and sawed the air with the gesture known as wind-mill, his left flung back the flap of his ready made coat revealing a label, so that all might read "The Fair. $7.98."

It was the finish touch for Sally. "Oh look, didn't I tell you it came from Chicago?"

All oblivious of the real cause of the very evident impression he was

making, roller after roller of Barker eloquence broke upon the rocky shore of his Eastern audience. But the jury was visibly impressed. One time my face grew very red and the shrimp pink reflection had made it red enough before.

"Torn from the loving arms of a beauteous wife like a common criminal he was snatched away from honour and love and position and credit and all that he had wrested from the world's grasp. Picture the poor young wife, deprived of her tender and loving partner, alone in the mountains, away from her home and her dear friends, weeping copiously, pale and feeble and sick, enduring agonies of dread and fear."

Eyes unconsciously travelled to where I sat in the full glow of health, looking uncommonly comfortable. Vainly I tried at such short notice to become pale, cowering, fearful, sick and tormented.

But unabated the volume of the orator's words flowed on, carrying with it all the debris of his memory. He finished with a peroration in which the glories of the nation past

and present were in-woven with the stars and stripes of the noble flag, and the eagle screamed triumphant.

He sat down mopping his brow, the jury filed out and in five minutes filed back again with a unanimous verdict: "*Not Guilty.*"

Dean, by far the more intelligent of the two counsels but with human kindness turned to bitterness, the mark of Cain upon him, shrugged his shoulders, muttered that he "would get even" with Barker, and stalked alone from the court room.

I sent a thought of sympathy and certain admiration after him. He was so undoubtedly one with a chip on his shoulder, a man against whom every hand was raised. His own doing. He met the uplifted hand with sullen bravery and asked no quarter.

Heavy weights sink to the bottom, and the grappling in this legal pool had troubled only the surface. But tragedy had hovered above the rude, bare court room—shadows of the murdered Fox and Cortwright, and the uncertain fate of Dean and

Barker, that feud being but just begun.

Gladly we scuttled out of town, and leaving the Tevi facing east at the railroad, fifty miles distant, we sought cover among the Red Men, until the winged words of the 'special correspondent' (who meant us no harm, merely business) had ceased to buzz over our particular morsel of Yellow food.

XI.

ON THE ROSEBUD—PLENTY COUPS' PEACE-PIPE

WHEN Nimrod and I arrived at the Crow Agency, the first picturesque figure to catch our eye was Whiteswan, or, to be more accurate, what is left of Whiteswan after the Custer Battle; for now he is chiefly memories and one sound leg. He has, to be sure, a bullet-shattered right arm and two remaining limbs semi-paralysed, which in his portraits of himself, he very properly disregards. Whiteswan has passed from a great brave in war time, to being the

chronicler of his tribe in peace. Like many another, he has laid down the gun for the pen, and, following in the path trod by the worthy Cellini, the glory of his deeds has lost none in the telling.

Pictograph is the Indian written language, as originally it was ours. But we have long since evolved "S" from a striking serpent that hisses and "M" from the crude outline of a cow's head saying "Moo," while the Indian, well-contented, has continued to follow the customs of his ancestors, knowing not the unchanging *name* of a tree but the look of it in all weathers and all seasons. His own barometer, compass, architect, food-provider and defender, he needs none of the complicated civilised machinery, and his library is always spread before him. Hence the pictograph serves sufficiently well now, as in the Stone Age.

Through an interpreter I asked Don't-walk-on-top if the Indians had any jokes, whereupon he drew, amid much chuckling among the by-standers, one of the old reliables from the stock-in-trade of the human race,

WHITESWAN—A PORTRAIT BY HIMSELF

regardless of colour or country. He called it "Two squaws scolding their husbands for being out all night." I refer this drawing to the Art students as it appears to contain a valuable suggestion—If hands are difficult, don't draw hands. Or as in the record of Exploits by Whiteswan, if an incident is to be disconnected from others on the same page, turn it upside down. Surely such a solution would occur to few, but it is undeniably effective.

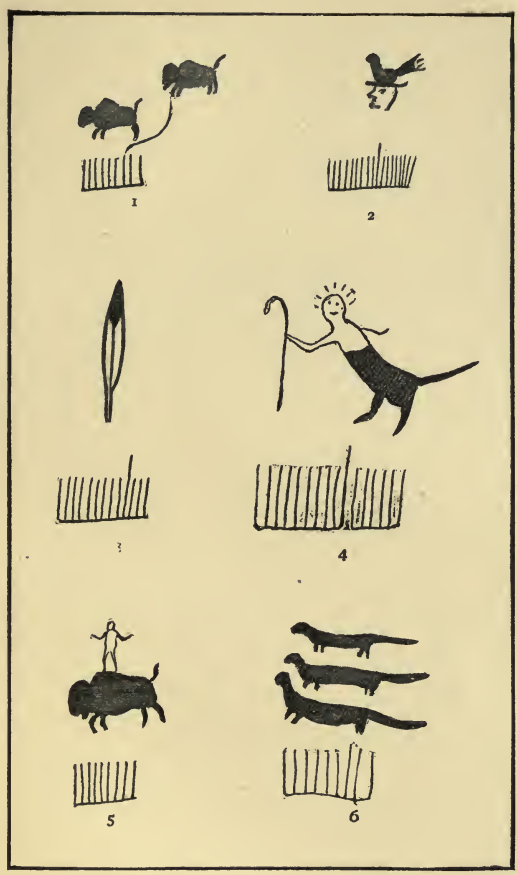
The dominant figure among the Absarokas is Plenty Coups, the war chief. He finds the pictograph quite sufficient for his needs in running a country store. Why keep an elaborate set of books with double, redouble (pardon) entry, and a staff of mathematicians, when a ledger like the following serves every purpose? A mark is put for every dollar, a long mark for every tenth dollar and a picture above to denote the owner. When the account is cancelled it is rubbed out. Why have a burdensome file to remind one of "has beens"? The ingenuity of Plenty

Coups's drawings shows his inheritance in the pictographic art.

How many, off hand, would be able to depict with a few strokes "He Rides on Top" (5) or an "Old Woman Otter" (4) or "The Other Buffalo" (1) or a "Small." This last, simple enough, an arrow placed in the hand for comparison of size. Wonderfully simple—when one knows how.

Our introduction to Plenty Coups was effected by Whiteswan and upon this occasion another side of the Indian simplicity was forced upon us. Happy people to whom the germ theory has not yet penetrated! Not a thought do they give whether there be one or five million bacteria in their food, or utensils. The principal social ceremony, that of smoking the peace pipe, is the epitome of indifference to microbes good, bad or neutral. Squaws, striplings, and unfeathered braves are not allowed to participate in smoking the peace pipe, so when this honour was offered to me, a paleface squaw, my courtesy and prudence had a severe strain.

Chief Plenty Coups's village where



PLENTY COUPS' LEDGER

1. The Other Buffalo
2. Bird-on-His-Bonnet
3. Plain Feather
4. Odd-Woman-Otter
5. He-Rides-on-Top
6. Plenty-Otters

he holds rude court, is about four miles from the Agency where his trading store is located. At council and on gala occasions he wears his great warbonnet made of eagle feathers, one for each deed of valour, or coup. The string trails far on the ground, and it was the great number of these that gave cause for his name, Plenty Coups. He is a born leader; his mental equipment and executive powers would have spelled success in any walk of life, and now, convinced of the hopelessness of struggling against such overwhelming odds as the pale-faces possess, he has accepted their way and taken successfully to commerce.

It was nearly nine o'clock on a very black night, which had enabled us to lose the road twice, when we finally reached the Chief's teepee and waited without, while Whiteswan announced our arrival. The Council was about to begin. As Whiteswan opened the flap for us to enter, the heavy air of many unwashed people in the twenty-foot teepee made me elect to stay near the door, thereby gaining credit for modesty (it is not seemly for a

squaw to be too bold) and doubtless contributing to the honour that the future held. The braves were seated cross-legged in a wide circle around the fire. Plenty Coups in the seat of honour opposite the door, the chiefs next in standing were on each side of him and so on till the circle was completed by the paleface visitors. In groups back of the councillours stood squaws, children, youths and various disqualifieds. I was the only woman seated, the Chief having graciously motioned me to do so. No English was used, not a syllable; in fact, hardly any Absaroka, the whole ceremony was performed in the sign language, of which Nimrod knew a good deal and I a smattering.

By gesture Chief Plenty Coups said that he was pleased to welcome the distinguished stranger who loved the animals and understood the wild things, and pleased to greet his squaw.

Then Nimrod arose. He expressed himself that for three sleeps we had travelled to make the acquaintance of the distinguished

Crayon drawing by Don't-Walk-on-Top

TWO SQUAWS SCOLDING THEIR HUSBANDS, WHO HAVE BEEN OUT ALL NIGHT

Plenty Coups, etc. (I longed for a moving picture of him in action.) When Nimrod had finished his pantomine, a squaw brought the peace pipe, and handed it to Plenty Coups, another squaw filled it and by means of two sticks, brought a live coal from the fire, our only illumination. Majestically and in absolute silence the Chief smoked the time immemorial emblem, in this case a sandstone carved bowl and a twisted wooden stem two feet long, much painted, beaded and feathered. At last it appeared to be drawing well; he arose and blew four smokes, to the four Great Winds or Spirits. First to the East, the beginning of all things, then to the North, the South, last to the West, the end of all things. Silently he sat again upon his fur robe and passed the lighted pipe to the right hand chief, Grey Wolf, who repeated the ceremony with equal solemnity and handed the pipe to Whiteswan, on Plenty Coups's left. Slowly in this manner the pipe progressed zigzag down the line. I fell to counting how many mouths it would have entered before it came

to Nimrod, providing he was to be favoured—twenty-three! poor Nimrod! I had not even the satisfaction of offering him some antiseptic lip salve, by chance in my pocket, as the silence was so obvious, I had not the courage to break it. As the twelfth brave sat down Plenty Coups indicated that he thought it was proper for the distinguished paleface and his squaw to join the ceremony. So the evil-smelling thing came our way and Nimrod arose and did his duty.

I was in a quandary. It was contrary to all custom and a very great honour to include me, but the Chief surely had made the sign of long hair, which means squaw. Still when Nimrod proffered the pipe I hesitated, but Plenty Coups left no room for doubt. "The Great Spirit will accept greeting from the paleface squaw."

That pipe was the nastiest tasting and smelling thing that ever got into an unwilling mouth. The tobacco was rank, the mouthpiece, of course, had done yeoman service. I managed to salute the East—why were there so many points to the compass?

—the North and South got smoke tears as well as smoke. Well, at least the West was the end of all things. I sat down feeling that I had earned a brevet from the diplomatic service, and as soon as possible sought the air.

I have never been able to place the blame for the indescribable taste of that pipe; to be sure I am not a second Mrs. Buchanan and I had never smoked a pipe before, so it may have been any one or all of those twelve braves, or it may have been the innumerable previous ceremonies, or the poor tobacco. Well, it is a bygone. The moon had burst through the clouds and the ride back to Crow Agency was delightful, and before the Dog Dance, two days later, I was quite able to discriminate between vinegar and mustard and appreciate the graciousness of that majestic old man with his featherful record of exploits and his dignified acceptance of national defeat. Long may he couch on sage brush, talk in sign language and write in pictograph! Civilisation has nothing to teach him.

XII.

AT THE FEAST OF THE DOG DANCE—THE WAY OF ARABELLA HORSE-TAIL

ONCE an Indian, always an Indian. No matter how the "Great White Father" may pinch and pound the clay, its shape may alter, it is still red clay. It was at the Feast of the Dog Dance that I realised this in learning the story of Arabella Horsetail.

The three o'clock recess bell had not stopped sounding when a figure in brown calico, sprigged with white,

stole out of the schoolyard gate and sped along the road to the railway station. The west-bound train passed an hour before, so the place was deserted, and Arabella Horsetail crossed the tracks unobserved and away up the hill, where a turn in the road hid her from sight of the tiny settlement, which the Whiteman calls Crow Agency. On sped the flying feet over the pathless arid waste to a group of trees a mile away, the only ones in sight. They marked a sudden crack in the ground, as though God had scooped out the place with His finger that some green thing might find moisture, and live. Six trees only had dared to rear themselves in this gully, and their shapes could be seen from afar, the more so as strange objects marred the symmetry of their outline—oblong shaped bundles of bright coloured blankets, wound from end to end with buckskin thongs and securely strapped to the branches; for these were the *Manakes-ees*, the trees of the Absaroka dead.

The girl sped to the last lone tree, where memory said, her mother had

been placed six years before. Instinctively she went, with unseeing eyes, and flung herself at full length on the bunch grass beneath it. Her mind was in a whirl. Wild rebellion filled her thoughts. The ways of the Whitemen were past bearing—how she hated them! They had snatched her away from the happy careless life of her people when she was a roly poly babe of five. For ten years they had made her wake, sleep and eat at their bidding, had coaxed and coerced her to learn their manners, their customs, their ideas, until civilisation hung upon her like a badly fitting garment that hid her good points and showed her bad ones. And now, so pleased are they with their work, they are going to send her to Carlisle, the Whiteman's college for Indians, and for three more years there would be no escape—*unless she married.* Why should they think their ways, their religion, so much better than those of her people? "They have taught me," she thought proudly, "to think in their language, but they cannot teach me to think

their thoughts, for I am Indian, an Absaroka, and come from a great people, who would rather walk on the great broad earth that belongs to all, than on a carpet made by one man, owned by another and coveted by a hundred. Ugh! I hate them, I hate their civilisation. In their arrogance, forcing upon us, the weaker, a religion upon which they cannot agree themselves. They ask us to give up our way of bartering a thing we don't want for a thing that we do, and learn instead their love of money, though all the time crying that it is the curse of the world. They have brought us whiskey and cigarettes. What do they offer us in exchange for the bright sun-heat, the wild glad rain, the mountain top, the crystal stream, the everlasting plain, for the rich red blood coursing through our veins, for the love of nature, whether her moods be stern or gay?

"What is their civilisation? Do they pretend that it will make us happier? Look at my people to-day! This is what they would force upon me, their man-made clothes,

their man-made God. And because they are many and my people few, they say, 'We are right; do as we do or die'—and we die.

"They killed my mother when they tore me from her arms, her one ewe lamb. 'Manita, Manita, I cannot live without you!' I can hear her last cry now, so long ago, before Grey Wolf and Whiteswan laid her away up there. 'Manita!' Oh mother—and *they* call me Arabella Horsetail! Ugh, I hate them!"

Manita sprang to her feet with clenched hands, flaming cheeks, and arms uplifted toward the tree. She suddenly became aware of her surroundings. The tree where her mother had lain so long was empty, and on the ground, not six feet from where Manita had been lying, was a long bundle with thongs cut and wrappings undone, and protruding from the mass of blankets was the shrivelled, mummified remains of—her mother.

She stood for a long time stunned, gazing at the awful spectacle. Then with a little shake, she began to think again, but slowly and with difficulty

"Coyotes—tore—it—down—perhaps—No, no, the thongs—were—cut—with a knife." She approached shrinkingly.

"Her rings—armlets and necklace are gone—she has been robbed! The White Devils have done this—they have robbed my mother—they have despoiled the dead!"

She felt numb. She could only repeat with wearying monotony, "They killed her—they killed her!" After a while the voice in her ears said instead: "They robbed her in life and in death."

The peculiar odour from the corpse added to her horror. Then something snapped in her brain. She sank in a heap beside her mother, and went floating off into space in a swirling, throbbing darkness.

It was dawn the next morning when Sharpnose and Whiteleg, herding cattle on the range, passed the Manakes trees and noticed some unusual objects under the south bank of the gully. They rode up to see what they were.

Their approach awakened Manita, who had passed from her swoon into the sleep of youth, and was much refreshed. The curses of Sharpnose and Whiteleg as they replaced the dead in a crotch of the tree and lashed it firmly with Sharpnose's lariat, told Manita that her mother would be avenged, and her thoughts took a more personal bent. The rebellion in her heart was ten times stronger than yesterday, but she no longer wanted to take Whiteleg's bright sharp knife and plunge it into the heart of Mr. Warwick, the missionary and teacher of the school. To kill him would mean to die too. The arms of the White Government are long and many, and merciless—and she wanted to be free, to get away from it all, to live the life of her people, the life to which she was born.

An Indian woman is, according to the Whiteman's law, a ward of the Government—in the Agent's power—until eighteen, or *until married*, and admitted to be marriageable at fifteen. Here was the loop-hole. She had no wish to be married, but

she was fifteen and she saw a chance for escape, if——.

As she stood facing the rising sun, waiting for Sharpnose and Whiteleg to restore to its place the outraged dead, a plan was slowly forming in her mind. The great, fiery ball was well up in the horizon when the two men approached her, leading the horses.

Ah-heh-et-seh, Sharpnose, the famous hunter, was lithe, sinewy, graceful, with clear coppery skin and handsome face.

It-tas-da-chirsch, Whiteleg, was thickset, with heavy, stolid features to which smiles and flashes of pleasure were little known.

Manita sighed. She would have preferred Sharpnose, but he was married, and would not do. Turning to Whiteleg she said, "Will you take back me to the school? Your horse will carry double."

Sharpnose, with a nod of goodbye, flung himself into the saddle and galloped away. Whiteleg silently mounted his horse and notwithstanding that animal's objections, vigorously expressed, drew Manita

up behind him and started madly careering for the Agency. But the horse soon gave in to the sharp bit and settled to a walk. Manita had her arms around Whiteshirt's waist, holding on. Her brain was busy. Suddenly she spoke.

"It-tas-da-chirsch, they are going to send me to Carlisle."

A grunt came from in front.

"I hate them."

Whiteleg nodded.

"I won't go."

Silence in front.

"It-tas-da-chirsch, I won't go, I won't go and you must help me." The arm around his body tightened into a squeeze, and Manita's lips were close to his cheek. "There is but one way to escape the White Devils. I must marry in my tribe; Whiteleg, will you marry me?"

There was no response, so Manita hurried on. "We won't *really* marry, you know. Only make believe, according to the Whiteman's ceremony and their God, and we would go away to your teepee. Wah-pu-ta, your mother, would help us, and on the next Sunday, at the meeting

of our people, you can divorce me —according to *our* law—and I shall be free! It won't be much trouble for you. Whiteleg," she said, persuasively "Will you?"

Whiteleg shook his head and grunted. The nearness of the girl confused him.

"But remember my mother, remember the years I have been a slave, remember what they have done to our people. Remember Pine Leaf—how they sent her to Carlisle. They said she was so bright and clever and so adaptable, that was the word, and how, when she graduated there was no place in the world for her. The Whites would not take her into their hearts and homes just because she wore high-heeled boots and carried a parasol and spoke grammatical English. They might welcome her as an 'interesting development,' but receive her as a sister, daughter, wife? Never. She was too Indian. And we, you remember how we despised her, how we turned our backs upon her because she had forsaken her people. She was too English for us. There

was no place for her, so she gave herself to the Manakes-ees and now she lies buried on the Custer Trail. Whiteleg, I shall be like Pine Leaf. No, no! I will not go! I want to live with my people, and be free. It-tas-da-chirsch, won't you? and," she added, cunningly, well knowing the man before her, "it will make Mr. Warwick very sad, for he will think we have insulted his God and his people, and when he sees how little we care and all are laughing at him he will gnash his teeth. He will hate us, and we will be like thorns in his feet; will you?" A slight pause "and I will give you my pony that Whiteswan is keeping for me—will you?"

Then the Indian spoke.

"Ugh! I hate the Whitemen. When shall it be? I'll take pony."

Manita's delight, was barely restrained, and the man began to enjoy the situation. They were nearing the settlement and Manita poured her plan into her rescuer's ears. He listened with occasional grunts, until he drew rein before the school-yard gate,

and the girl slid lightly to the ground.

Two weeks later the inhabitants of the handful of houses that comprised the Crow Agency were in a state of wild excitement. Arabella Horsetail was to be married that morning to Montgomery Whiteleg—the Montgomery dating from the week before, when the Indian had submitted to being baptised and christened, any English name taken at random, on which occasion Mr. Warwick ignored the fact that although Whiteleg knew a good deal of English, he took no part in this ceremony, except through an interpreter, and thanked God that His "poor servant had been the means of bringing to the fold another of those benighted children, and that He in His providence, had thus miraculously interceded to change the heart of the unregenerate, so that disgrace might not fall upon one already in the fold."

In fact Arabella Horsetail had found the way of her marriage with Whiteleg remarkably smooth. When she had walked into the missionary's room at the school after

that memorable night and announced her intention of marrying Whiteleg Mr. Warwick had ejaculated "Thank God, who is merciful to the sinner!" And after sending a message to recall the search party that had set out the night before to look for Arabella he had talked very solemnly to her about the sacredness of marriage and the terrible punishment of those who live in sin, and advised her to convert Whiteleg so that an early union could be effected.

His reproaches for running away, she took in silence, and life for the next few days went on as before. Neither conspirator had thought of the necessity of the Christianising of Whiteleg before the missionary would perform the ceremony, and it was not until bribed with Arabella's painted buffalo robe, an heirloom left by her mother, that It-tas-da-chirsch consented to become Montgomery Whiteleg and nominally a Christian.

It was while hurrying back to the schoolhouse after this interview that Manita overheard a conversation which unravelled the puzzle of her present position.

She was passing behind the hedge that encircled the missionary's garden, and Mrs. Warwick's voice, musically accompanied by running water in the irrigation ditches that redeemed the garden from the surrounding waste, was saying to a group of Agency people there assembled for a lazy hour before dinner:

"Yes, the Indians are a queer people, and they do not civilise easily. The Government has to admit another failure in the recent disbandment of the last Indian Regiment."

Capt. Wilkins, newly installed in command of the Crow Agency, formerly at the Cheyenne remarked—

"Oh, they are a good-for-nothing lot, and hopelessly immoral."

"Well, I cannot agree with you in that," Mrs. Warwick replied, "or at least when the divine influence of religion is at work. Take the case of Arabella Horsetail. The naughty child in a moment of rebellion against some petty correction, I suppose, ran away from school. She doubtless was seen and followed (or it may have been planned) by the dark-

browed Indian, Whiteleg. They were out all night, but early next morning he brought her back, both of them looking as unconscious as could be. Of course it was dreadful, she was so young, although quite old enough, according to their notions, to marry. My husband could get nothing out of her concerning her night's escapade but wild stories of faints and dead trees, to which of course, he paid no attention. But he felt his duty in the matter and as delicately as possible made her see her immoral position, and his victory —thanks to the All-wise Power, was easier than he had expected, as Arabella herself proposed marrying Whiteleg, and has been instrumental in bringing him into the fold of the Redeemed. As you know, the wedding has been hurried as much as possible for her sake, and takes place next Sunday. It will be the first Indian wedding sanctified by the church and Mr. Warwick feels that he has not laboured in vain. So you see, my dear friends, they are not quite unredeemable."

And a silvery laugh floated over

the hedge and lost itself in the water, as Manita stole away busy with the problem that has worn out so many, why it is easier to believe evil than good.

The wedding was set for three. Already the morning service was over and Arabella was being dressed in a white frock of lawn, well starched, and a net veil that had already done duty as a window curtain in Mrs. Warwick's parlour. Manita in soft buckskins and beaded moccasins, with hair unbound, might have rivalled Pocahontas or Minnehaha; but Arabella Horsetail in a tight white dress, with skirt and sleeves at that fatal neither-long-nor-short length, in clumsy shoes, her stiff black hair screwed into a knot behind, and the blood swept away from her face by excitement, leaving it a dull gray brown, was depressingly ugly.

The sun glared in the cloudless sky. Arabella's schoolmates were already fidgeting in their seats in the chapel, where the ceremony was to be performed, and the various

white folk of the Agency, including ourselves arrived, when word was brought to the waiting bride-elect that there was a hitch in the proceedings. Montgomery Whiteleg refused to have his hair cut. A simple thing, but a knife upon which nations have split. To the Indian the loss of his hair was an indignity, to the missionary, the refusal to lose it a sacrilege. The affair was at a deadlock.

When the situation was explained to her, Arabella arose, rushed out of the school, and, her white veil floating behind, ran along the road, around the corner and into the trading store, where Whiteleg, the centre of a group of men, was sitting savage and sullen. He looked at her out of the corner of his eyes, and then seizing her hand he pulled her into the street, out of hearing of the men. "The White Devil goes too far," he muttered.

"It-tas-da-chirsch promised Manita," the girl said simply. Then she added, "My three ponies and my buffalo robe are yours. At the Dog-dance next Sunday it will be

your turn to throw the lasso around Mr. Warwick."

Whiteleg turned sullenly to the store and sat down again in the chair. Arabella motioned to Tom Don't-walk-on-Top, the interpreter, who was also barber, and then sped back to the school.

Ten minutes later Mr. Warwick joined these two according to the Episcopal service of the Christian religion, Arabella Horsetail responding in English, and Montgomery Whiteleg only through the interpreter. Then came the congratulations. All Arabella's schoolmates kissed her good-bye, and looked at her with big wondering eyes that she could yet seem the same while she must be so different, being now married, and they gladly allowed the problem to be drowned in lemonade and cake.

As soon as the ceremony was over, Whiteleg strode from the building and waited in front under a tree for Manita, who soon appeared in a blue and white calico dress, followed by old Wah-pu-ta, each carrying a big bundle, these

comprising all of Arabella's worldly effects.

When Whiteleg saw them he wrapped his blanket around him, thus covering his 'store clothes,' and empty-handed, as befits a brave, started at a slow pace along the road to his wigwam, some two miles from the settlement. Manita lifted the bundle to her head and followed him, keeping well behind. Wah-pu-ta did the same, and in this fashion the three trailed along the hot, dusty road, and disappeared from view.

Manita had been installed in her new home three days when one of the events occurred which are so important to the modern Indian, the monthly issue of beef.

By sunrise Whiteleg mounted one of his newly acquired ponies and set off for the Agency. He was to be sentinel that day, and after riding through the still sleeping settlement, he climbed a high hill to the south, from which direction the cattle were expected. There he remained for hours seated on his

horse, a mere speck breaking the severe line of the hill against the horizon, but able to see and be seen for miles on either side.

Manita and Wah-pu-ta also were early astir, for they had the work of the modest establishment to do. Wah-pu-ta was old and feeble, and many household duties, such as carrying water, chopping sticks and loading the tethered horses, tasks quite beneath the dignity of a brave, had been reluctantly assumed by Whiteleg. Manita, since her coming, from a desire to be useful and not to be a burden on her rescuers, had performed these duties and many more, and Whiteleg had found it very pleasant to sit in the sun, smoke cigarettes and watch her. During his long hours of vigil, the thought continually recurred to him that his teepee, of which up till now he had been barely conscious, had become a much more attractive place than it was last week, or last month with only Wah-pu-ta in charge. His mind slowly and laboriously worked out one or two clear impressions concerning just

what part he should play at the coming Dog Dance, and that part would not be, he well knew, in accordance with the will of Arabella Horsetail. He had decided that Arabella was good enough to keep, and that instead of divorcing her, and thus bringing to a successful termination this farce, he would at Dog Dance marry Manita, the daughter of Seatiss, the Wolf.

Meantime Manita, unconscious of the cloud threatening her darling wish to be free as the birds and responsible to none, blithely did the chores of the wigwam and the cooking bower, and enjoyed the morning freshness, which so soon the sun would scorch away. They were encamped by the Little Bighorn, a muddy stream, which in some way managed to coax a few trees and bushes along its banks. It seemed almost attractive by contrast with the monotony of alkali sun-baked land that spread away for hopeless miles and miles, and comprised the Eden that the Government has reserved for the Absarokas, or Crows.

When Manita had harnessed two

shaggy horses to the fourth-hand Studebaker, she threw some sacks and boxes into the wagon and helped Wah-pu-ta to scramble to the seat beside her. The old woman tied a red and green handkerchief around her withered face and opened a huge white cotton umbrella, through which the sun glared with tireless energy. Manita started the horses on a jog trot, guided them into the road, not far distant, and joined the straggling procession of similar conveyances, and of foot travellers, who all were bound for the same place, the Clerk's office.

The Government's office at the Agency on beef-issue days was a puzzle of Whitemen, Indian and food, which invariably worked out the same result — misunderstandings—in spite of the reasonings to the contrary of the wise men at Washington. The record of each nominal head of the family is kept, and a certain amount of coffee, flour, bacon, beans and the like, is doled out to him by the allwise Government, which sits in its spacious well-managed homes in the Far

East and regulates these things. The beef also is bought by the Government, driven alive and killed on the spot, an admirable plan, if contractors were always honest.

Manita had followed all the little excitements of the day with keen interest, it being her first beef issue from the Indian point of view. As the sun was getting low, she was once more seated in the wagon with Whiteleg beside her driving, and Wah-pu-ta packed in the back with bundles and boxes of provisions. Manita had clasped in her hand a bundle containing a pair of moccasins and a belt of finest buckskin, beautifully beaded, for which she had exchanged her wedding shoes.

Nothing was said as they jogged along. The twilight came quickly, the crescent moon and numberless stars dappled the deep blue sky. A gentle evening breeze cooled the earth, but it failed to cool the fevered thoughts of It-tas-da-chirsch, in whom the meditations of the morning and the frequent draughts of firewater in the afternoon had

combined to produce a state of maddest adoration for Manita.

Emotions such as these do not remain long concealed, Wah-pu-ta was asleep in the wagon-box. Whiteleg put his arm around Manita and kissed her. Then the horses requiring attention he was obliged to release her. Manita did not understand, but she entirely disliked the new development. Soon Whiteleg renewed his addresses, which Manita repulsed.

"It-tas-da-chirsch has been taking fire-water," she said in Absaroka.

"It-tas-da-chirsch loves Manita, the fawn-like. She is good cook and strong. She make good squaw," thus Whiteleg, who was a man of few words.

"At Dog Dance I will really marry Manita." He again attempted to kiss her.

The world seemed suddenly to have broken in two and left Manita suspended in mid-air. She climbed over the seat into the back of the wagon, jostled Wah-pu-ta into wakefulness, and being thus protected,

tried to calm her thoughts and face the new situation.

She had no intention of marrying Whiteleg, but she had no alternative if he wanted to marry her, for in the minds of every one but Wah-pu-ta, Whiteleg and herself, she was already his wife.

She had made a mistake in taking for granted that Whiteleg would feel at all times as she did. She had made him too comfortable, had fitted in too easily. In her gratitude for what he had done and was to do for her, she had tried to please him, and she had succeeded too well. Fortunately she still had three days before the Dog Dance to change his mind.

Her first opportunity soon came. Whiteleg, who was getting very drowsy, dropped his whip in the road. Manita refused to pick it up saying she was too tired, but agreed to hold the reins while he got out. Grumblingly he did so, and stumbled back after the whip. He heard the rumble of wheels when he stooped to grasp it, and straightened himself in time to see his wagon fading out of sight down the road. He started

after it, but if there is one form of work a settlement Indian hates more than another, it is walking; besides he was uncommonly drowsy. So he sat down on the bank beside the road to wait for Manita's return, and soon toppled over into an uncomfortable position and fell asleep.

When he awoke, water was running in the irrigation ditch beside him, and the sun was unpleasantly hot. He was within sight of his wigwam that had seemed so far the night before, and he was in no amiable mood as he shambled to the cooking bower and sullenly attempted to eat what Manita set before him. The bacon was burned to a crisp and the coffee had a queer taste, but Whiteleg said nothing as he feared the fault was his own palate; the Whitemen's whiskey, as he knew, was not a good morning appetiser. Neither did he question Manita concerning last night's disappearance. He had a feeling that the less said about last night the better. But Manita was ready with an explanation; had, in fact, sat up half the night awaiting his return.

"Whiteleg, the horses nearly ran away last night. You know I am not gifted with managing horses. I studied figures and words at school instead of horses."

Whiteleg looked up in surprise. He had particularly noticed the power Manita had over the horses, which is one of the prides of the Indian. He found himself under the necessity of changing his original conclusion, to his mind, an unpleasant thing in itself. Then he noticed that Manita was sitting idly on a box in the shade, when she might have been unpacking the wagon, and shortly afterward she wandered off down the river, so that he was obliged to help Wah-pu-ta with the heavier things, which were too much for her strength.

Manita came back in time to cook the evening meal, and in response to Wah-pu-ta's questions, said she had gone off for a walk feeling rather lazy, and had stopped with Ba-kee-da for awhile, and that Ba-kee-da had taught her a fascinating game of cards, called casino. No, she was not hungry,

Ba-kee-da had prepared a nice meal for her.

Whiteleg grunted. Wah-pu-ta had a good deal to say but she said it mostly to herself in an undertone. Manita was amiable and apparently unconscious of any change in the home atmosphere.

The dinner was a failure. Manita was attended by bad luck. The beans were not cooked enough and she had forgotten to season them; the molasses, which was to redeem them, had been allowed to stand so long exposed that it had become the last home of so many flies and bugs that even Whiteleg passed it by. The meat, by some awkwardness Manita upset into the fire, and when it was rescued, tasted chiefly of ashes and smoke. Manita obligingly cooked another piece which, she being in a hurry, was not even warmed through. The bread and the corn were burned, Manita's attention having been distracted by her other mishaps.

The next morning Manita put salt instead of sugar in the coffee, time-worn but effective device, and did several other absent-minded things

which at last brought forth an irritated rebuke from Whiteleg, to which she replied good naturedly—

"I am sorry I am not a good cook, and I certainly did have better luck when I first started, but what do you expect from a girl brought up at a Government school? They don't teach them to be good squaws. They teach them things like this," and she repeated "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night," which Whiteleg did not understand, and which bored him exceedingly.

After that Arabella Horsetail often recited verses she had learned at school, and went about in a mooney sort of way, failing utterly to see the many little things she might have done to assist the wigwam economies.

By Saturday night Wah-pu-ta had naturally slipped into her old position as cook, and Whiteleg, as of yore, had to fetch and carry, for Manita was never available at the right time, or if she were did the task very badly; not from ill-will, she always assented cheerfully, but her mind was so occupied with gazing at the stars, reciting verses, and book-

learning generally, that the fatigue of watching her bungling, was greater than doing the thing itself.

I had been a witness of the mock wedding the week before, and now on the following Sunday at the Feast of the Dog Dance, I was to see the second and final scene.

I remember how blazing hot it was, and how dusty, as we drove in a springless lumber wagon three miles out from the Agency where the Indians were encamped. Every stone, every leaf was shrouded in a thick dust garment—even the river bed of the Little Bighorn had shrunk to a mere thread; the heat rose from the alkali dust in shimmering waves fairly cooking us brown, as in an oven. Drawing near the gala ground we saw many teepees dotted along the banks with only a few clumps of willows and one or two scraggly cottonwoods to break the awful glare. Many of the teepees were painted, which made them most picturesque. A large one coloured dull red, stood out for miles. It was further decorated with a band of

animals in various colours, blue, green, white, black, and the door was closed with a beautiful grizzly bear skin of which Nimrod secured a photograph together with a copper-coloured baby standing in front. The little fellow could not have been more than four years old; he wore nothing but a little breech-cloth, a pair of moccasins, a necklace of elk's teeth and a feather in his hair, arrayed for the dance. When he saw that Nimrod was going to photograph him, he ran to fetch a big stick, slipped a rag of a garment over his head and placed himself in front of the teepee, the big bear skin hanging behind him, his right hand grasping the stick, up high—little body as straight as an arrow, deliberately posing—most unusual, as the belief is current among Indians that some virtue goes out of them into the pictured resemblance.

When released he scrambled on to a pony and joined a dozen or more Indian children who were dashing around on ponies trying to lasso each other. Many of the ponies carried double, one 'buckskin' had

three little girls all riding bare-back, not a scrap of harness on him but a string bridle; they stuck like burrs—without sign of fear—and made the horse gallop and turn and twist in their play. They wore cheap calico dresses with coloured rags braided in their hair, but were dressed for the occasion in moccasins and leggings beautifully beaded, and some wore strings of beads and wampum. A band of young braves in white man's garb mounted on cow-ponies were having a race, and rope-throwing contest on the prairie. We had seen that sort of thing before, so we left our horses tied to the wagon in a group with a dozen others that had come from long distances to witness the Feast.

The Indians had gathered from all over the Reservation, these feasts serving as a kind of convention at which to transact the business of the nation; disputes are settled, business adjusted, marriages solemnised, treaties enacted.

A circle perhaps a hundred feet across had been formed by teepees and rough shelter tents and in the centre of this was a tall pole with

the American flag at the top and some feathers tied below it. Around and around the pole danced the warriors in full war paint. Some of them were of splendid physique and their costume was not designed to conceal their anatomy. It was principally necklaces, armlets, anklets, beads and feathers. A breech-cloth was the only thing worthy to be called a garment, although some wore a beaded flannel jacket, red or blue, and sleeveless. The head-dress received chief consideration—beads, bits of fur, ribbon and eagle feathers, in a band going around the head and along a tail hanging to the ground. There must have been two hundred Indians standing and sitting around the dance circle. At the south end was the teepee of the Master of Ceremonies. He came out every now and then and announced in a high singsong voice what was going to happen, in Crow, of course. Next to his teepee were the musicians. A strip of canvas had been stretched above them, and they needed it. Two or three men beat tom-toms, while a half a dozen women relieved each

other in chanting a weird, high wail, in which one could distinguish a certain rhythm.

Nimrod was concerned for fear I would have a sun-stroke, my face was like raw beef, but the squaws made room for us under one of their sheltering canvases, and we sat there for two hours watching the performance. The concomitants were indescribable—the heat, the glare, the sweaty Indians, the crying babies, the flies, attracted by bits of food thrown about.

I had been watching for a long time a charming Indian girl arrayed in all the glory of an elk-tooth jacket, wampum necklaces and beaded leggings, her thick black plaits of hair woven with bright ribbons. As she was evidently nervous, and a visibly nervous Indian is a rarity, I asked the interpreter about her. He looked at me in surprise and said, "That is Manita—and that's It-tas-da-chirsch," indicating a sullen looking, burly fellow who was watching Manita narrowly.

In their Indian finery I had recognised neither as the bogus white

folk who had stood at the altar the week before.

With the assistance of Tom, a very good fellow, we followed the course of the ceremony. The music was never allowed to stop and the braves—I forgot to say that they were gaily painted with stripes and spots of yellow, red, black and white principally, over the face and body—would dance when the spirit moved them and until they were tired. There were always some of them dancing in a kind of continuous performance. One time Mak-ke-nah, the Master of Ceremonies, came out and made a long speech. He was a scraggly looking old man, and he became much excited, waved his arms about wildly, stamped up and down, fairly howled sometimes—looked as though he was making a stump speech, and so he was. Tom gave us a gist of it. He began:

"Hear, hear—listen to Mak-ke-nah the Silver-tongued! All ye of the mighty Nation of Absaroka, Greeting." Then he went on to say that his people had been great but were now under the heel of the Whiteman.

He painted their past glory with lavish brush, indulging in much wordy fireworks, and then he blackened their faces and called them miserables in a dozen ways and told them that they would be less than nothing if they did not rise up and smite the Paleface—Nimrod called him "a regular old fire-eater." I could see the black eyes of the Indians begin to snap. Every now and then there would be cries of "How how!" Then when he stopped, exhausted, a fine old man with much dignity came out—and we recognised Plenty Coups, one of their most honoured chiefs. He said he sympathised heartily with everything that their eloquent brother had said, but that he was foolish in a variety of ways for stirring up the people, as it was hopeless to fight the Whiteman; that the world had swept beyond the Indian, it must be the will of the Great Spirit that they should no longer conquer, and they must be patient while the cloud was upon them.

Then the Silver-tongued came out again and said with many flourishes

that he supposed the Chief was right, and that now they would have a good time feasting. He called down the Spirit of the Dog upon them. A large iron pot was brought into the centre of the ring. With upraised arms he gave a kind of incantation over it. Then the cover was lifted off, and I saw it in the pot! Boiled Dog! Some of the hair was still sticking to the skin. Every man, woman and child had a piece, eked out with soda crackers and dry bread. Then all the braves joined in the great dance. They ki-yi-ed and they hoop-la-ed and perhaps after that dog business I would have been ready to go, but for that beautiful, nervous Indian girl and her sullen companion.

During the Feast of the Dog and subsequent dance, Manita had been earnestly talking to It-tas-da-chirsch. She seemed to be arguing with him. He appeared obdurate. At last, with a gesture of despair, she stopped. Her arms hung dejectedly by her sides. Suddenly her face brightened. Quickly she went to the Chief Plenty Coups's teepee and disap-

peared. Whiteleg looked after her in perplexity. Faster went the dancers, louder and louder grew their cries, and minute after minute sped by. Then down from the tent came Mak-ke-nah, leading by the hand the wild-eyed girl.

Raising his arm in a commanding gesture a sudden silence fell upon the throng.

In a low voice at first, and gradually gaining crescendo, he told Manita's story, as she had poured it out to the listening Chiefs, of her unhappy childhood, of the mission school, of her mother's death, broken-hearted for her five year old baby torn from her, of the vandalism at the dead trees, of It-tas-da-chirsch's bargain, of her payments to him of the ponies and buffalo robe and now of his refusal to divorce her. With graphic words he laid the story before them and finished:

"And now wise people of the great nation of the Absaroka, what shall be done to this maiden? Shall ye make her squaw to It-tas-da-chirsch, who already has her ponies,

or shall ye grant the freedom for which she beseeches ye?"

He stopped; a murmur arose. Then stood up an old man, Bear Claws, the father of Pine Leaf, the one who had killed herself because she had been educated away from her people.

"Let her go free," he said briefly.

A young buck on horseback in the outer edge of the ring echoed the phrase. Many voices took up the cry. Whiteleg was urged to the front, but the affair had gotten beyond him. He made no resistance. A chorus of "How—hows," and the thing was done. Manita, with eyes shining, with the painted symbol of virginity still on each cheek, bowed to the four winds and sped away to be once more a member of Seatiss's teepee circle—sped free as a bird toward the distant hills and the sunset.

With her went the charm of this primitive scene, and we too turned our faces toward our birthright—the rising sun, and civilisation.

PART III.

ON THE OTTAWA

XIII.

TE-VIS-CA-BING

THE Ottawa region was the very own stamping ground of the Tevi. Bobbie Tevis had created a hunting box in the wilds on one of the innumerable lakes that puncture that country like a sieve. Te-vis-ca-bing he called the roomy log camp, which appellation when strongly accented on the second syllable, suggested appropriate Indian. If he had perpetrated "Idlewild" or something or other "villa"—but of course, Bobbie would not.

The Tevi, Nimrod and I tumbled off the train late at night much excited—after two years to be again in the woods. Much violent uprooting from home duties had been required to accomplish it, but the precious freedom was ours, and heaven (a place where one does what pleases one best) became available on the twentieth of September.

The little town of Trois Lacs (butchered into "Trollak" even by the Canuck natives) was already dark save for the saloon, and we gladly burned the midnight candle while exchanging fripperies for frugalities of costume and luggage in preparation for the early morning start.

Once while following the economical and primitive method in vogue at this "hotel"—guiltless of plumbing—I went to the window to throw out some water, when my hand was stayed, barely in time, by a masculine voice pouring out a torrent of bad French, or rather a *patois*. Two figures were standing directly below in shadow:

"You will not come. I shall dance with Francois—"

A mocking feminine voice floated up to me, and, as I discreetly lowered the sash, the man was vowing by all the saints in the calendar that he would be at the dance, that he knew a way, trust him, and that the *plus belle* flower in Trois Lacs should dance with no one but himself, or his hunting knife would kiss the flesh of Francois.

I only understood a word here and there but enough to occasion a remark to Nimrod concerning the picturesqueness of the Latin love-making. The Saxon type of man who earns his living out-of-doors, would probably have *said* simply, "I am coming—and I mean business," but the results would have been the same, or even more 'unhealthy' for Francois.

There was no delay in the start. By six o'clock our guides were waiting and in another hour we and our belongings had been ferried over the Ottawa in a huge batteau that looked none too strong to navigate the rapids and the log-choked surface of this mighty river.

While the wagons that were to

take us the forest part of the journey were being packed, Sally and I stood on the shore and looking across the turbulent water-way to some lumbermen's shanties, bade farewell to the Ottawa, and to cut-glass, damask and long skirts. Then we inspected the men upon whom so much depended for comfort or misery during the next month. The Tevi's two guides, George and Arthur, were Ottawa river-men and experienced in the country. Bert, our special guide, as well as the all-important cook, had been imported from the Adirondacks. The Cook was a Civil War veteran burdened, as we soon learned, with disabilities and wonderful stories. Nate Crêche, as "camp boy," completed the party. Nate was essentially a "Trollak" product. It was his birthplace, thirty years ago, and represented to him the big world, to which he came occasionally when he had accumulated enough to have a "good time." Reared in lumber camps, with limited intelligence and no education, but much native cunning, he spoke three languages abominably, English, French and Indian.

Nate once described himself as a "*pot-pourri* of French, Indian, Nigger and Irish." He knew how to do a great many things badly, but he had one ability which, by dint of much practice, he had developed into an art—he could tell a lie, or a chain of lies, and make it a well-nigh perfect piece of work.

He never employed the truth if he could arrange to do without it, and it was this consistency that made him possible to get on with, as the mischief of a lie comes when it is believed.

Physically he was as tough and stunted as a scrub oak, swarthy as an Indian; his head, surmounted by a great mop of coarse black hair, was small and set on a massive muscular throat column, such as the Stone Age man must have had, and which was further developed by long use of the tump line. He was a creature who seemed to have inherited many of the vicious strains of his various forebears without their off-setting good qualities, save a certain Irish good nature.

But I digress and am doubtless

too severe, influenced by the recollection of certain occasions, two in particular, when we were victims of this irresponsible creature—really no more to be blamed than a lumbering mastiff puppy who knocks over one's pet Sèvres vase by a wag of his tail.

The supply wagon had been packed and our host wanted Nate to start ahead with it. Nate was not to be found until a loud halloo brought him up the bank from the river with a remark about "getting a drink of water."

George favoured Arthur with a wink. "Nate's been sayin' good-bye to his girl. She's a good 'un. He is afraid he will lose her."

Far across the water at Trois Lacs, I saw a tiny figure in white standing on the shore, and was reminded of the other two lovers the night before. Truly Cupid seemed busy here.

Such a road we now had to travel! We could not claim to be unacquainted with such, as this was not our first trip into the wilds, but there is something so aggressively uncomfortable in a rocky, boggy, hilly,

rutty corduroy road, that one can never form the habit. Like Cod Liver Oil, each acquaintance with it means a fresh victory.

Fifteen miles in five hours would hardly win the Vanderbilt Cup, but when Crosby's Lake, our lunching place, shimmered through the trees we were as thankful as though its silver were the hard earned bauble itself, and we the owners.

At luncheon Bobbie, perched precariously on a boulder, held forth on the merits of canoes over horses as a means of locomotion. It sounded attractive—and proved to be all quite true—long hours of gently gliding through placid waters, fish darting beneath, ready to furnish hygienic meals, beautiful arboreal shores in view, now far, now near, flower-strewn portage trails, with an occasional game animal staring at us through the trees. Likewise the greater carrying power of a canoe over a horse and consequent additional comforts—about which there is more to be said later.

But Bobbie gave only one side of the picture. He neglected to state

that sometimes the fish refuse to be caught and that it rains, yes, and rains and rains again, and the winds lash angry waves, upon which, there is no peaceful gliding but much need of strenuous endeavour and a knowledge of swimming. He failed to note the necessity of staying in a cramped position until one has sampled a large collection of aches and, lastly, that the flower-strewn portage is more often the trail of fatigue on which burdened humans, doing the work of pack-horses, sweat and strain. No, my preference is still for the four-footed friend who does most of the work, neither automobiles, airships, nor canoes can win away my allegiance.

Still I acknowledge the wonderful charm of the water country and the almost human companionship of the canoe. And the soft ease of smoothly gliding on a placid lake was borne in upon my soul the following morning when we were astir before the sun had cleared away the water veil that had draped the landscape in silvery softness. We had spent the night at a deserted lumber camp, now in

'EACH IN A CANOE WITH A GUIDE TO PADDLE

charge of a man and a cow, and used as a half-way house by the few travellers who go into those wilds. Crêche and the Cook had already started with the loaded wagon over a well-nigh impassable wood road. We were to take the water route and all expected to reach Te-vis-ca-bing that night.

Each in a canoe with a guide to paddle it, we slipped through water so calm that later when the inevitable photograph was developed, so sharp was the reflection that one had to examine closely to know real from shadow. This was indeed all that our host had pictured. The wooded shores brilliant from the first frosts rose like the rim of a huge cup waiting for Manabozou to quaff an autumn vintage. Three miles of easeful silent motion and we landed at the first portage. Each guide without waste of time or speech swung his canoe over his head and started on the trail, in this case a mile up a hill and down again to the next lake.

We started more leisurely as the guides were to make two trips to our one, we having brought some

"duffel" that Bobbie had deemed not wise to leave on the bumping, jolting wagon—eggs for instance, and other breakables. Nimrod weighed his pack, twenty-three pounds, and laughed it to scorn, but I noticed he was willing to rest when Sally and I, out of breath, dropped on a moss-covered bank at the top of the hill, Bobbie carried his guns and seemed to find them sufficient. I had started with a gun, seven pounds; a camera, three pounds; a little bag, two pounds; and a fishing rod, half-a-pound. One by one these articles were transferred to Nimrod, but I wish to relate that I came triumphantly through with the fishing-rod.

Once more in the canoe on the Second Lake, in answer to my obvious remark that every pound seemed to double its weight every five minutes, Bert, my paddler, said:

"Yes'm. Some greenhorns tries to work us like pack-horses. But let 'em try a 'carry' themselves. I've seen 'em. They begin by throwin' away and throwin' away until they get down to a pocket handkerchief. Then they tear that in two—and

keep the half with the hole in it—*sssh!*"

He had spoken in a low tone for we might see game at any time, and his abrupt ending warned me that something interesting was about to happen. Nimrod in the bow of his canoe nearby was already craning his neck at some object across the lake, perhaps half a mile.

Bobbie was calling in an excited whisper to Sally to look at the moose, and then I saw the creature, a spike-horn bull, wading in the shallow water eating lily buds. Quite at home he pursued his breakfast undisturbed by us (we were silent and not near) as though he knew the law protected him until the first of October. Of course, he had nothing to fear from us at any time, we were not hunting spike-horns, but health and happiness.

For several minutes the canoes stole toward him, as he was on the very spot where we were to land. Then, realising the continued approach of the strangers, he bestirred himself a bit, turned out of the water, shook the moisture from his

glistening coat and trotted along the portage trail till out of sight; then, as Nimrod announced later, when studying the tracks, he swung off into a thicket.

Third Lake proved uneventful; then a two-mile carry. Fourth Lake was punctuated by a bivouac lunch at the beginning of the next carry. The sun was hot now and had roused to a busy hum all the tiny voices of the forest, but although we knew animals big and little were in the neighbourhood, probably observing us at the moment, we saw nothing but tracks.

Fifth Lake took most of the afternoon, a monotonous dipping of paddles. The last carry was through a treacherous bog and then into the Home Lake and Te-vis-ca-bing two miles away. The evening shadows were gathering, nature had thrown a bewitching peace on the stretches of water, woods and sky, an occasional jumping fish caused a sweet glad note as it plashed back to its home, and then rang out the weird call of the loon. *LLLLLa-llllloooo, LLLLLLLa-llllloo, lilla-loo, loo—*

the echoes took it up and sent it back as a welcome to us from their world, the world we all loved. Thus we came to Te-vis-ca-bing, offering shelter and camp-fire hospitality, its outlines showing in the half-light of a rising moon. Even as we looked, two red eyes shot forth—a light had been made from within.

Good—we thought, Crêche and the Cook have arrived, and all goes well for a start on the trail to-morrow. We were all keenly impatient of any roof but a canvas one, and in the woods where one takes only necessities, to be separated from the supplies is like a caravan in the desert without water, a steamer in mid-ocean without coal.

Our satisfaction, alas, was short lived. We soon found that Clifford, an Indian game warden, whom our thoughtful host had informed of our coming, had started the glowing welcome of the hearth, and Crêche with our precious supplies was still an unknown quantity. So was the Cook, but a cook without cookables does not count.

XIV.

A CANUCK'S TRICK

FOOD was the important question.

The cabin was well-furnished, but being new, it held no hope of left-overs from the year before. Clifford produced a little coffee from his pack, all he had, and we hesitated to deplete the scanty store of beans and bacon in his camp on the next lake. So we waited "with both ears hung out of the window" as Sally expressed it, and pretended we were not hungry.

It was nearly ten o'clock. "What

can have become of the-boys?" had comprised our host's remarks at quarter hour intervals ever since dark, and he was considering a search party when Nimrod suggested the old device of firing three shots in case they might have missed the road. Soon a feeble halloo called us all to the door, and behold—the Cook, a very lame and tired old man hobbling toward us, *alone*, with not so much as a Uneeda biscuit in his hand.

To our questions, tumbled one after another, "Where is Crêche? Where is the wagon? What did you do with the horses? Is there anything wrong?" The Cook sat heavily on a chair, took the proffered coffee and remarked that he'd "be——if" he knew or cared where Crêche was, that the horses were safe till morning, picketed in a little clearing, he did not rightly know how far as not knowing the road he had "travelled a bit," which being interpreted means he was lost. His story, sifted, smoothed out, and pieced together, was this:

About three o'clock, Crêche while

tightening some ropes on the load discovered that a big brown canvas roll was missing. He told the Cook to drive on, that the road was plain and not more than three miles farther, while he would run the back trail. He said he thought the bundle must have worked loose while crossing that stretch of corduroy in the swamp. "It's a wonder a feller kept teeth in his head, let alone bundles on a wagon," and with that he had departed.

The Cook, on a strange rough road with strange horses (canoemen seldom know much about horses), soon decided he had had enough, and taking advantage of a little meadow he had picketed the tired beasts and left them to feed as best they could, while he set out for the cabin. Darkness soon obliterated the occasional blazing on a tree that marked the road, and he had the prospect of wandering about all night, within half a mile of us, when the gunshots enabled him to get his bearings.

At daybreak George and Arthur went for the wagon and returned

with it in time for us to have a substantial breakfast. Thus cheered, we counted off the boxes and bundles hoping that Crêche might have been "mistaken," as we politely put it. Alas, this time he had spoken the truth. There was a big brown canvas roll missing, and it was—*mine*.

In an excess of thriftiness, I had put into it all things necessary for my use in the tent—bedding, clothing, toilet articles, everything that represented my personal comfort and independence. No one had a surplus from which to supply me. There was no question. The bundle must be found.

I knew it had crossed the Ottawa for I had seen it. "Poor Crêche, he may have to travel the whole of the forty-five miles to the River. That bundle must weigh nearly a hundred pounds. He never could carry it all the way back in one day," I said, adding "How would you like to do it, George?" For that person's face wore a quizzical look I could not understand. He was packing ammunition in a bag for Bobbie

and waited until the top was secured before answering.

George always was deliberate and spoke in low tones, wasting no words —as though game was near.

"No need to worry about Nate. He won't hurt himself. Likely won't see that bundle afore he gets to the River."

A snake-like suspicion darted through my sympathy for the absent Crêche—the River, a girl in white waving farewell, a torrent of bad French under a window.

"Was there a dance at Trois Lacs last night, George?"

"Not as I knows of."

"To-night, perhaps?"

George's eyes betrayed slow surprise, then twinkled.

"No 'm. *To-morrow* night the Frenchies have a blow out."

To-morrow night! Keep us waiting for *three* days. He would never dare. I dismissed the idea as preposterous. Surely he was liable to appear at any moment.

We spent the day watching, waiting, fuming. My thoughts alternated between sympathy for poor

bundle-burdened Crêche, walking ninety miles, more or less, and indignation at his possible perfidy. Being a guest, I said nothing. Our host openly berated him as stupid, careless, lazy, but had no inkling of ulterior causes that might have explained his continued absence.

That night we determined not to lose another day while waiting for Crêche.

"He is as watched for, as a truant lover," said Sally *almost* jerking down the shade that had been left up so that the lamp-light might shine out as a beacon.

Bobbie decided to move all the paraphernalia possible to our first camp on White Lake, known for its big fish, and get it ready, and with the guides he spent the day doing this. There is much to be done to prepare a "permanent" camp, which is to be lived in for several days. A temporary camp is a one-night stand. Trees must be chopped, tents put up, a fire-place made for cooking, very elaborate, after the Adirondack manner, with stones and live logs; and, not to be forgotten, a landing

place for the canoes. The more experienced a canoeman is the better care he takes of his fragile craft. The originator of that old adage, "an ounce of prevention" etc., must have been a canoeist.

Nimrod and I arranged with Clifford and another Indian who was quartered at his camp, to make an early start for Loon Lake to visit an echo cave of repute among the Mangasippi Indians. To my question, "How far?" I got answer:

"Three lakes—two little portages—a big one. Across Loon Lake two, three mile; quite a piece, walk to cave. Lady can do it; walk quick; paddle quick; no pack; one canoe; Clifford come to-morrow—sun up."

To feel really intimate with a day one must greet it at birth. So subtle and elusive is the dawn's language, limited and elemental—like all youth—only three king notes separate the tranquil spaces of increasing light—form, colour and lastly, sound.

Four figures in a canoe, gently moving through the rushes of a tiny stream that joined Home Lake with Next Lake, did not seem to disturb

the harmony; left not so much trace as a cow moose trotting along a game trail and stopping at the ribbon of water for a morning drink. We crossed the tracks, clearly seen on the sandy bottom, and so fresh that the water had not obliterated them. Just a gracious bowing of the water grass, as we slipped over it, a soft swish as it rose and the scene was as before our passing. On the banks, often within arm's reach on either side, hung ripe sarvis berries and brilliant yew and holly still glistening with frosty dew. All was softness, brilliancy, mystery, peace; I could have laid my cheek on the bosom of that morning scene and been lulled forever in a sweet content, so beautiful was it, so indescribably satisfying. Only in a canoe could it be possible to thus approach and move in nature.

The sun rose to the eight o'clock position and the mood changed. Quiet yet but no longer hushed or reverent, we debarked to avoid some rapids that emptied into Next Lake. Once more in the canoe, the Indians at bow and stern,

paddling, Nimrod got out his sketch book to perpetuate for future reference, a gorgeous yellow mushroom, probably poisonous, and I employed the time with a fishing-rod securing four wall-eyed pike for the camp table. One of them was spawned and grew and grew to a goodly three pounds to become part of history, for it furnished a note in Nimrod's journal that it weighed three pounds and its "stomach was full of crawfish."

The following lake was rather rough under a rising wind. We paddled fast across it, too fast for fishing. It was evident that Clifford was anxious to reach Loon Lake when the wind increased. But we had not half crossed the long portage when dark clouds began to gather, the day had grown rough and masculine, full of energy and menace and when we came finally to Loon Lake the waves, gathering force from a three-mile sweep of open water, were rolling inshore vigorously. We had difficulty in getting launched, a fierce gust of wind threw us back on shore, and Clifford had to spring into the shallow

water to save the canoe from some rocks. He looked at the storm-clouded sky, the rolling white-capped waves, at Nimrod, and finally at me; but we said nothing, not realising as he did, the danger of such a sea in a heavily laden canoe. Besides to turn back or give up is the last thing to commend itself to us.

Cat-like he jumped into the bow, and the two paddlers battled against the waves for the open. The wind storm increased. The white-crested waves rose higher and higher. We were drenched with the spray and began to ship water, no light matter when the gunwale was barely three inches from the water line. Then the black raincloud burst, emptied itself in a deluge, and we were fairly caught in a perilous place.

The Indians exercised all their skill, fortunately great, in keeping the canoe in the wind. But the craft was filling and nothing apparently to bale with.

"Can you swim?" I shouted to Clifford above the gale. He shook his head without turning around, his eyes glued on the approaching

WE BALED AND BALED WITH OUR FOOLISH UTENSILS

billow that almost rose over him. With a skilful turn of the paddle he poked the nose of the little canoe up through it.

"Can you swim?" I asked of the stern paddler. Another shake of the head. Incredible! these men living thus precariously on the water, and not able to swim! I blush to confess that I was very inexpert. Only Nimrod to save us all. The canoe was rapidly filling. It must be baled out soon or we should sink. Nimrod and I cast about with our eyes for something, anything with which to bale. No other part but our eyes moved, for we all were balancing ourselves to a hair in that cockleshell.

Nimrod spied a tomato tin, brought to boil water for tea, and I bethought me of the rubber drinking cups in my pocket. Rapidly with as little motion as possible we baled and baled with our foolish utensils. It was a fight of endurance. The waves were gradually drifting us to shore, if we could but keep the frail craft from capsizing or sinking for a little longer. The wind was

increasing. It seemed hopeless, when the downpour stopped as suddenly as it had begun; and before we could manage to land, far from where we wanted to go, the sun grinned out at us, as though it were a huge joke, and he wished to say: "I've come out to dry you off. It does n't matter."

So it is, out-of-doors, the elements are somewhat rough and inconsiderate playfellows sometimes, but one must accept them with all one's puny strength, or not play the game—live in cities and forget the gods.

When finally a dry match was found, a fire built—Nimrod has a record on one-match fires with wet wood—and as we stood around it drying clothes and eating lunch, I was received into the order of canoeists, having successfully passed through the initiation.

Clifford said something in Indian to his friend. Nimrod, understanding a little, looked at him enquiringly. "I said, Squaw all right. No afraid! bad water, very bad. She no cry! Take her anywhere." And I felt that honours perhaps when

only partially deserved are sweetest, for I *was* afraid.

Determined not to be balked we "did" the cave by a long tramp through the woods. The wind and waves had subsided under the influence of the evening calm, and the return journey was made under as great a charm as the morning.

But its fabric was different: not promise but memories was the woof, and the warp held threads of gold instead of silver, of gold and copper and black; and of purple, the emblem of experience.

The next morning we ate the wall-eyed pike and waited for Crêche.

But, since I was the one inconvenienced, I insisted that we ought not to wait for him longer, that we move to White Lake and let Crêche follow. Secretly I felt sure that he would appear before the day was over, since the night previous was the "Frenchies' ball"; but the spirit of charity was still warm within me and I refrained from giving reasons for my expressed belief.

"Since Mrs. Nimrod seems to have a special wireless on Crêche, and

knows he is coming to-day, let us start," pleaded Sally, coming to my aid, and it was so ordered.

As the camp was made and already provisioned and we had only personal luggage, which meant running the trail but twice, once for that and once for the canoes, we could afford to start late. It was about eleven o'clock; Sally and Nimrod and I, each in a canoe with some luggage and a guide paddling, had already pushed out from the landing when we heard our host's shout of joy from the cabin and, like great ugly two-headed birds we floated—again waiting for Crêche.

We could hear Bobbie's by no means courteous orders addressed to the camp boy to "shut up and hurry up." Then Crêche appeared, a black ant crawling down the steep bank to the landing, with a huge brown bundle on his back, my thrice precious and welcome belongings. He threw it into a canoe and pushed off. The Cook got into his canoe and pushed off; but still George waited on shore with the last canoe ready for our host, who came not.

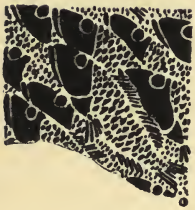
In silence we waited. The woods had taught Sally and me not to exercise our feminine prerogative of speech on all occasions in or out of season, and it was characteristic of these men that no one asked a question of Crêche as to his recent whereabouts. It would all come out in time, and there was plenty of time for that, but not to get started.

George glanced twice up the bank toward the cabin, which indicated his state of mind, for he never showed emotion.

"Crosby's with the boss," remarked our camp boy, laconically as he too rested his paddle with the motionless fleet.

Crosby was a teamster from Trois Lacs. So this much we knew, our canny Crêche had not carried a hundred pounds forty-five miles, but had ridden in state. He had, however, a blotched and bleary look which indicated loss of sleep and bad rum.

Our host now appeared and concealed whatever his feelings might be with his usual genial expression. Being a man of affairs, he did not



let a detail swamp the whole. Our comfort was now assured, Crêche could be dealt with later, and it really was a glorious day to start on a pleasure trip. So his voice rang out cheerily: "I tell you, Mrs. Nimrod, you will have need of that tackle from your bundle to-morrow. We will show you fishing that is fishing, and you will have to hold up the honour of the family and catch a record breaker."

Bobbie's generous heart was torn with conflicting desires, his own natural ambition to catch the "biggest ever," or for Sally to do so, or for his guest. Nimrod refused to fish and I had only been led into angling by the assurance that I should catch a "whale."

We halted at the end of the first carry for luncheon, and then was produced by our camp boy a neat fabric of half-truths that would have done credit to the most skilled news-gathering reporter.

He had missed the bundle, yes—he had felt it his duty at any cost to find it. He had travelled until it was dark. He was near that old

deserted shanty, so he went to sleep, without supper, of course; was up again at daybreak. He looked and looked for it all the way to the River. He was puzzled, for he was sure he had noticed it on the wagon. It was getting well on towards noon; he had to have food, and besides he might learn of the bundle being picked up (clever Crêche) so he crossed the River to Trois Lacs. He spent some time enquiring (quite true), and knowing that even if he found the bundle, he could not get far on his way that day, and being tired, he decided to stay in "Trollaks" and start at daybreak. This he did, though a little late as he overslept himself (twice clever Crêche to tell so much truth) and he had gone about four miles when it suddenly occurred to him that the road here had a short cut, which was worse travelling, but he might have taken it, he did not rightly remember doing so as the Cook was telling one of his yarns about then. So he thought he might take the short cut now and see, and there, by "the head of the

blessed St. Stephen," if he did not discover that "divil of a roll" not a hundred yards from the main road. It had rained hard in the night and the bundle was partially soaked in spite of its waterproof canvas (alas too true, poor me). He tried to carry it, but it now weighed fully one hundred and thirty pounds. He was mighty strong but there were limits, he would not carry that much forty-five miles for any man "alive or dead," not he, much as he would like to please "the boss." So back he went to Trois Lacs to get a team. He found that Crosby was going to haul some furniture to Te-vis-ca-bing soon anyway, so he finally got Crosby started that very day and he went as far as the bundle, and saw it reloaded. Then as he had done the best he could, and could not hurry matters any further, he thought he might as well attend to a little business in "Trollak." He promised Crosby to meet him at the lumber camp the following morning at sunrise, which he did, and here they were, having come through in a hurry.

"Why had he left Crosby the day before?" Why he did not mind telling, not a bit, not he. He was not needed anyhow, so he thought he would slip back and take his girl to a dance. If he wanted to do that and travel the rest of the night, he guessed that was his affair (thrice clever Crêche, the actual truth).

The story seemed plausible, in any event what could Bobbie do now? It was past, and we had the satisfying present. How good it was, that dinner under the trees!

A camp-fire blazed a hundred feet from the cook-fire, with a folding table and camp chairs placed for dinner between them. Oh the joy, the sweet peace of the camper's life! No problems come to vex him save the hour for dinner. There is no world but that of the bone and the muscle. Kings may die, nations rise and crumble, lives come in and go out; it matters not. The rumble of the straining world sounds not for him. The iron horse comes not, nor does that modern Ariel, the Marconigraph, seek speech with him.

Tree and bird and beast, hot sun, cold winds, rushing torrents, giant rocks and mighty distances; these are the gods he worships with pain and fear, with strength and joy.

While dipping my hands in the lake I reached over and kissed the water, and the widening circles from the touch took the message, "There is no spot in the whole earth where I would rather be than here."

I never should have known the whole truth about that bundle but for the strategy of George. Drinking in camp is, of course, tabooed; but George saw that Crêche had not emptied the whiskey flask brought from Trois Lacs, so he kept urging the willing camp-boy to finish it as the evening wore on. One by one all went to bed except George and the talkative Crêche, whose tongue now was running three ways at once, English, French and Indian. Our tent was close by and while Nimrod snugly slept on his rubber bed, I, wrapped in my recovered but still damp blankets, heard the truth of their disappearance.

Crêche's language was not print-

able but his thought was clear enough. A few of the fragments sufficed to lay bare the undisciplined creature's perfidy.

"——promised Toinette I'd come —she's *la belle fille*, such a shape— prettiest foot on ze Ottawa, she's *my* girl—couldn't have zat—François dancing with her, no by—— why she's soft as mush on him—I said by ze head of St. Stephen, I'll be zere—she laugh—*skrrrrrch*—but Crêche he *savez* a way, he dropped zat bundle soft-like, didn't want to hurt it—made—shure it was *hers*— *he he*, women hates to miss zeir things—so as I'd be shure to have to go back—*savez?* I made shure it was zere all right, but Crêche did not bother it—no, no—*he he*—I tell you my girl was sprised to see Crêche—she gave me a warm welcome — and I fixed ze Frenchy. *Shrrrch*—if I did keep 'em waiting three days—let 'em wait—by ze head of St. Stephen, Toinette's——"

But I had heard enough; without remorse, without appreciation of his treachery, proud of his tricks, what could one do with such a cave

dweller? Thankful that he had not given "Toinette" many things in the bundle that she would have liked, I tossed the matter aside and took up the thistledown trail.

XV

CONCERNING A NEW ACQUAINTANCE —THE MUSCALONGE

THIS is the record of a scoffer downed, a sceptic converted. To hold one end of a line while a small wriggling thing is struggling stupidly to get away at the other end, and further complicated by wetness and sliminess and sun-burnt nose, had never appealed to me as either amusing or worth the doing. To be sure I knew that some persons prefer syncopated music to classic, yellow journalism to conservative, it being largely a matter of education in

taste, and I was quite willing to concede that I might be in the syncopated yellow stage of angling, and, like most syncopated yellow lovers, had no desire for change.

However, fate in the guise of Bobbie, forced the education. On a cold grey day with an east wind, sharp as needles, I was placed in the middle of a canoe, a stone was in the bow, and Bert in the stern, paddling. In my hands was an eight-ounce steel rod with a contraption on the cork handle which was called "a patent, adjustable, automatic reel." On it was wound two hundred feet of "three-ply, double-snelled Pierce peerless suprema" line finished with a "ruby red" hook, two feet of "gloriosa" gut, a three-dished spooner, an additional "Daisy fly," a "merrivale sinker" and a "nonesuch float." If you do not understand, it is no matter, neither did I.

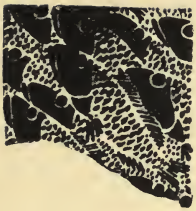
There was also a villainous looking hook on a long handle, called a gaff, and a stout stick to "finish him." A fur coat and a foot-warmer were the mollifying adjuncts.

I was expected to go slowly pad-

dling about, trailing this gaudy string for all the long hours of this raw, repellent day and evolve from it a "happy time."

I let out line twenty, forty, eighty feet, and reeled it up again. I caught water grass, snags and even stones. I broke the Pierce peerless line twice and lost the Daisy fly. Two hours went by in this sportive way. A fine rain which "made 'em bite," permeated the atmosphere and our clothing, and increased the sullen dreariness. I was chilled through and through and smiled sneeringly at the possibility of there being a Wagnerian method of angling. I longed for the glowing warmth of the camp-fire, but refused to go in with a blank record. Fish had been known to get on hooks, why not on mine? It could get on, I mean bite, even if I could not keep it. White Lake was the home of the Muscalonge, Sally had caught one, yea, in that very place, that weighed "over twenty pounds." It had taken a good hour for her to tell about it last night.

Five hours of this happy time had



passed and no bite. That time-worn recipe for a sleigh ride must have been created by an incipient angler, "wrap up in furs, put the feet in ice-water and sit in a snow drift." Bert pulled down his hat still further on the wind side and remarked:

"They're most done biting for to-day. ('Most done' forsooth, with what had never been.) We might go around this bay once more. It looks a good place."

Somewhere doubtless the sun was setting gloriously, Phoebus's chariot was visible triumphantly pursuing its brilliant western track, but here on the little bay, edged with jack pines, only deepening shadows told of its progress. Conscientiously I held the rod in the approved fashion, and, to forget the aggressive discomfort, had sent my thought far away to southern Italy to a certain moonlit marble terrace perfumed by orange groves in bloom and musicked by the voluptuous lapping of blue waves upon a glistening shore.

Suddenly a strong tug ran along the line, and up my spine, then a short tug sent a kindred electric thrill.

It was unlike anything I had felt before, instantly every nerve was alert. There was no need to be told —I had a *bite* at last!

Bert's excited face was in front of me.

"Hook 'im well," he cautioned. "Now reel—*gently*."

The line grew taut, I could not reel.

"Ease him up, or you'll lose 'im," coached Bert.

The reel hummed and whirred as it fed out.

"Reel 'im up, or he will get too much head," now came the mandate. I felt rather helpless. How was one to tell what was going on under the water?

I began to reel. The strain was tremendous. It seemed as though I must be towing the whale that had been promised.

"He's a whopper" announced the expert, viewing my efforts critically. "Must be twenty pounds. You'll have to play him well. Now watch —he'll dash away any time. Be ready to go with him. *Quick—reel out!*"

The line spun through my fingers, cutting the gloves like wire. Again the laborious taking in line with many a reel out, exciting but irritating. I had long since forgotten the cold, the rain or anything but the unseen will that operated under the veiling water.

At last I managed to coax that muscalonge within twenty feet and we both saw it. To me it seemed almost as big as the canoe and to land it with that tackle, absurd.

"He's a gee socker," cried Bert, "and awful foxy. He's working us near the rocks. Don't let 'im get around one and cut the line——"

"Hurry, Bert and get the canoe around the boulder!" I cried despairingly. "Hurry, he is *doing* it—Oh, pshaw!" and I collapsed in a heap as the tension was suddenly released and what was left of the line floated to the surface. My "biggest ever" had won.

I returned to the camp circle empty handed but full of experience. My education was progressing, I was beginning to understand some of the motives in this Wagnerian harmony

—surprise, anticipation, combat, despair.

The following morning found me eager to learn more—exultation and triumph for example; but that day taught me only patience and perseverance. It too was rainy and cold and deemed to be "a bad day for fish."

Then came the day of days.

Bert and I left camp early accompanied by a composite prayer that we catch something, if only a "little one." The exhibition of so much energy unrequited was beginning to get on the camp nerves.

Bert worked the canoe along the west shore of White Lake and back again. It was a clear day and noonday fishing was "no good," so we returned to camp for luncheon. The Cook only was in charge, all the others had gone off hunting. The woods were full of game, moose, deer, wolves and small fry. There was a kind of brooding reproof in the silence of my solitary meal of canned stuff. The camp relied upon me to supply fresh fish and to make a record catch and I had not contributed so much as a

minnow; instead, I was several Daisy flies and gloriosa catgut to the bad. I began to think of the afternoon with that heavy do-or-die heart clutch that prefaces the making of a speech. What if I should fail——.

The Cook was telling Bert about a wonderful fish which a "party he guided had caught, a thirty-pounder" on a pin-hook or some such combination. Ruthlessly I interrupted him.

"Come Bert, let's get to work."

If only I could finish up the business honourably and enjoy myself once again in the unenlightened way of a week ago before muscalonge had entered my horizon.

It came, the reward, about five o'clock in the shape of a sufficiently big fellow. For two hours I had reeled in, let out, given his head, coaxed him away from rocks and played him with what skill I had acquired from my failures. The tricks he tried to play, the many times he almost cut the line, or snagged it, I would like to relate, but spare you. I was almost as much exhausted as he when the big fellow was finally brought to the boat and gaffed.

There is a fisherman's rule, I believe, that for a game fish, an ounce of tackle to a pound of fish is fair sport. I had caught my first game fish with less than half of this allowance. Nearly eighteen pounds of muscalonge and exceedingly lively weight at that, with an eight-ounce rod and very light hooks and eyes—I mean the gloriosa, suprema, none-such adjuncts.

And behold now the wonder: I seemed to hold the Open Sesame and the fish fairly begged to be caught. A fourteen 'pounder' was added in another hour's work, and a careless twelve-pound muscalonge got on the hook before I could get home. We put it back none the worse, as we had enough food for camp use and no wish to be called by a little name of three letters that begins with *h* and ends with *g*.

In this wise did I learn the angler's secret, and to faintly appreciate how one might become enthralled with the piscatorial symphony; and freed from a self-appointed obligation, once more returned to me the beauty of an autumn evening. Again the

mournful call of the loon greeted, and as we glided campwards every little cove of the tree-shadowed shore seemed to harbour some thirsty animal that might momentarily step out of the dark woods to the water.

XVI.

SEVERAL THINGS ABOUT MOOSE

HAVE you ever tramped through sodden woods all day in the rain? If not, you have indeed missed something indescribable. The water laden branches send inquisitive showers that tease, like the questions of a prosecuting attorney, the places that one cannot protect, and burdened and clumsy with rubber clothing, one falls rather than climbs over and around obstacles. After a time, unless it is cold, one grows accustomed to the general clamminess

and remembers only that it is a good day to hunt. Then there are no dry leaves to craunch and rustle under foot and the wild things stay quiet, unless disturbed, and if they do 'travel' leave a legible account of their doings in the tracks.

It was the day after the muscalonge episode, and having acquitted myself honourably, though painfully of fish, I was free to join Nimrod on his daily prowls for what he could see. Bert went with us carrying a small back pack of midday food.

Our host had set forth early in the morning with George to locate a good camp ground, as he proposed to move from Camp Muscalonge still deeper into the woods where now were rising the notes of the moose. The last of September was upon us. The moose calves were old enough to take care of themselves, and the lady moose, no longer averse to society, were practising their love songs to which the bulls lent no ungallant ear.

That night we were going to 'call' for moose and we hoped to discover

the whereabouts of some big bull who might answer our summons.

A good 'caller' is rare, even among the guides, and our men had observed Nimrod with only half-concealed amusement as he procured some birch bark, fashioned it into a cornucopia, sewed it with roots of black spruce, and finally, hoodoo of all hoodoos, decorated it with a big moose head!

Clifford, the best caller on the Mangasippi, gave him the love notes of the cow moose and the challenging call of one bull to another. He did this not as a teacher to a pupil, but politely, without expectation of result. At the cabin Nimrod had diligently practised and soon revived his former accomplishment, and now that we were in moose country, longed to show his skill. Bobbie also had practised on Nimrod's horn and the guides openly sneered.

"That would drive all the game out of the country." George voiced his opinion candidly, but Bobbie only shrugged his shoulders. He could afford to let them laugh, as events proved.

It was a misty morning before sunrise when the canoes stole out from the landing at Camp Muscalonge and took their several ghostly ways, Bobbie's west, Sally's south, and ours north toward the headwaters of White Lake. The canoe was light, Nimrod at the bow paddle and Bert at the stern. An hour's silence, broken only by the *lilililiooo* of the loon, and the dip, dip, of the paddles brought us nearly four miles to the boggy willow marshes of the outlet. Beyond were stretches of ragged pines that were outlined only as black masses in the half-light.

What a weird place it was, beautiful and unreal as the shadow land of poets. The silence was the silence that bound the world before humans were. It gripped one with a sense of finality as though never could it change, and yet of suspense, for knowledge told that outside this witched circle of water and trees the world was in motion, the sun was marking its allotted course, and the animals too were astir, drawing over the country their accustomed

diagrams that spelled quest for food.

So portentous did the grey silence seem, as we waited and listened, that I longed for a release from it. My breath came in shortened gasps, and yet when Nimrod raised the horn to his lips and shrieked forth a moosely summons, it seemed a profanation. Another fifteen minutes of silence, every second of which my imagination made a living picture of a huge creature with eyes aflame and smoke curling from his nostrils, coming full charge down the runway at which we waited, and dashing into the shallow water straight for our canoe, an avenging spirit scattering retribution upon the hardy mortals who thus dared to tamper with nature. But the grey silence continued.

Nimrod sent another call of unearthly resonance echoing to the outer world. It came back to our magic circle mockingly. Slowly the light etched detail into the surroundings. At the third call, I no longer feared that the snorting avenger would come, but that he would not,

or even a spike-horn to say "how d'ye do."

Fifty minutes had gone by when a noise like the snapping of a twig in the woods sent an electric thrill of tensest listening along the canoe. But we heard no more. Doubtless a bull had drawn near, also listening, not quite sure, perhaps the voice was a little strange.

Nimrod raised another call and we distinctly heard a big animal getting away as fast as it could. That last call certainly had not been right. It might have been too close to the other, or it needed an additional note, or not so much, or was too loud. Undoubtedly in some way moose etiquette had been violated.

The day had come and with it the necessity of another kind of hunting—the stalk. Quietly, as ever, we landed, turned the canoe bottom up, for it was beginning to rain, and searched about for the track of our fugitive moose. Not that there was any hope of seeing him, for he would go miles before stopping, but for information, a natural desire to know his size. When we found it,

the track was that of a big bull and after all not very much alarmed. He had gone away quite leisurely and as this was probably his home locality, might be induced to return that evening, under favourable circumstances. We found a runway evidently in present use and followed far.

The rain was not energetic, but pervading. We paid no attention to it; we could not and go on. There are two ways of treating discomfort. Fight it and it conquers; ignore it and it is subdued.

It is wonderful how a huge animal like the moose can go through the woods, between and under branches. One could almost believe that he had some device of folding up his horns, as the Arab his tent, so easily does he go anywhere the width and height of his body will permit. The trail was thick with moose sign. Tramp, tramp, drip, drip, a misstep and down into a muddy hole I went; no matter, a degree or two more of wetness. As Nimrod was helping me up, a dozen pounds extra of water-proof clothing not being

conducive to agility, he remarked to Bert; "This is a queer hole to be in the middle of the trail. See, there are moose hairs in the mud. I believe it is a wallow."

Bert returned and the two examined the place, as carefully as experts would a diamond.

It was an oblong depression, perhaps four feet one way by two feet the other, sloping off toward the edge. It was in a bed of sandy clay and showed the effects of much pawing and fussing.

"Believe it is," exclaimed Bert. "Never saw one before. Heard of 'em often—and the last fellow here was left-handed."

"Left-handed?" I repeated, scenting the picturesque.

"Yes 'm. Most animals are right-handed, jest like us; but now and again you'll run across a left-handed chap."

"How can you tell?"

"Well, partly, it 's the side they lie on when the horns are growin' and partly it's the way they use their horns. Now, you see, that feller who was here wasn't very large,

probably had small horns. But he whacked the bushes always to the left. See? Have you ever noticed, antlers is hardly ever reglar? Right or left side is always bigger. Now that's according to whether he's right or left-handed. If he's left-handed the horn is nat'rally smaller from being used more and broke off——"

"Why not bigger from being developed more?"

Bert looked at me pityingly.

"Don't work that way." Nimrod, rapidly sketching, was noncommittal.

The rain had drizzled itself out when we got back to the canoe at dark. We decided not to 'call' at the outlet that night, but to give the big moose until morning to forget his alarm, and besides, we wanted to try 'jacking' at midnight.

Again the silent easeful passage through the water, only the monotonous dip of the paddles as a young moon hung itself between a mass of fluffy clouds and a black horizon line. Toward the north were strange unstable lights silvering the sky, a

mere tag end of the aurora borealis, but full of suggestion, like the low-lidded eyes of a Buddha. It seemed to push far away the merely physical things, the cramped position, fatigue, hunger and general soggy chilliness.

We were the last to arrive. Sally had a thrilling tale about a cow-moose and two calves, one a buck with little nubbins of horns. She had surprised this family group quietly feeding on marsh grass in a desolate place that had once been a smiling forest full of arboreal life, but which fire had reduced to a mass of fallen timbers with a few naked masts. A lumberman's dam several miles away had backed up the water of a stream so that the whole ruined region was submerged two or three feet. Fire and water were not here the rough jokers one must laugh with, but had been converted into destroyers by the ingenuity, and for the benefit, of money seeking man. And the victims, once glorious age-old trees, still bore sad witness to the power that had wrecked them years ago.

Sally first saw the mother moose

and her young about half a mile off and the place afforded so much shelter for a silently moving object that Arthur gradually pushed her toward them, until not more than fifty feet of marsh grass and water lay between. There she hid and watched, and more and more the charm of this life so different from her own, so uncomprehended by us, held her in sweet excitement. It was inspiring as when one comes on a sculptured group by Claudian standing on a pedestal amid other beautiful things, but so compelling attention by its surpassing grace of line and modelling, that all else is unnoticed, and one is translated to another world where only the pure tones of harmony are heard.

For some time the moose fed, the only sound being a faint crunching of their jaws as the juicy grass was gathered in. A lazy ear now and again flicked off a fly; the cow calf gave her back a comfortable rubbing when opportunity offered in the shape of a fallen log of convenient height. The bull calf being snagged in the flank by a sharp

stick, and thinking his sister responsible, made a retaliatory lunge at her, suggestive of some very human little brothers and sisters, which shall be nameless. Sister promptly got out of the way. Mother, unconcerned, calmly continued to scratch her head with her left hind foot.

Soon after, however, her attitude suddenly changed. She raised her head in attention, gave two low short grunts to the calves who also became alert, and then rapidly led them away from that peculiar odour, which, being strange, it was safe to assume was hostile. A faint breeze springing up had disclosed Sally's presence, and her Claudian was gone. Had it not really been a dream? No, the memory of it was too vivid.

As we all sat for a moment holding the picture of the mother group in our thoughts, my outward vision took note of something not far off in the darkness. It was a small brilliant orange light that danced in the air. It darted up and down like a live thing—"Look, what is

that?" and even as I spoke, Bert realising what it was, ran along "Broadway," the trail that led to our sleeping tents. The first tent belonged to the Tevi and it was—*on fire*!

We all rushed toward it, but were checked half way by a loud report, then another.

"My God" cried Bobbie, "Stand back! My box of ammunition—there is enough to blow up the whole camp! George, Arthur—*Bert*, stop!" he yelled.

Hardly knowing what to do we all halted except Bert. On he kept unheeding and amid a fusillade of exploding cartridges from Sally's shooting belt, he dashed into the flaming tent, seized that box of ammunition, containing several hundred rounds, and dragged it forth to safety.

It was a splendid act of courage for him, an awful moment of suspense for us.

George, who was checked but an instant by Bobbie's entreaty, was already cutting ropes and tearing down the blazing canvas. A few

cartridges from Bobbie's bed where he had thrown his shooting coat before dinner, continued to explode, and bullets flew about in a scattering fire, until Nimrod could appear heading his bucket brigade, which he had immediately organised, pressing us all into service. Every available water holder was passed along the line, from canvas buckets to coffee pot and saucepans.

Fortunately the woods were wet with the day's drizzle. The wreck of Bobbie's luxurious canvas home was bad enough, but a forest fire was far worse. That we strained every nerve to avert, and when at last all was safe, and the Tevi could take stock of the blackened remnants of their belongings, we all rejoiced that little permanent damage had been done except to the tent, which having been paraffine-coated to make it further waterproof, had been literally licked up by the flames until there was nothing left.

A candle lamp left burning had in some way slipped from its upright position and started the blaze.

As there were to be two jacking

parties that night, and we had not intended starting much before midnight we had wondered how we were were going to keep awake, for usually the lights on "Broadway" went out by nine o'clock. But the fire alarm had furnished more than ample diversion and it was after one o'clock before Bert announced that the canoe was ready and Nimrod and I took the languid blessing of the Tevi, whose interest in moose for that night had given way to the necessity of settling themselves in the supply tent.

A jack, as every moose hunter knows, is a lantern whose light can be turned on or off at will. When a moose, summoned by the siren love call is heard coming, it is flashed directly upon him. The theory being that the sudden flare of light fascinates the big creature, he approaches to investigate. He cannot, of course, see the humans hiding in the blackness, and then is the moment for the man and his gun.

Of all the perfidious tricks that man's superior intelligence plays on the animal's superior instinct, this

seems to be the worst. First to entice the bull moose to one by means of a love call on a horn, and then to bewilder him by a great blare of light, exposing him while the gunner is in darkness and the deed committed, is too much like stabbing in the back. It is not even "sport," when an animal's chance for life depends upon the ability of the gunner to hit a six-foot target a few feet away.

However, we were to find that, the gunpowder element being eliminated, an infuriated bull moose at close quarters is no mean adversary.

We paddled swiftly to Big Dam Lake, the place where Sally had seen the moose family. It might easily be a favourite resort for others, and as this was the beginning of the mating season, a suitable place for some big bull to be reconnoitring. The Tevi had expected to cover the Big Dam Lake territory and we were going to the outlet, but it occurred to us, after we were started that as they had decided to remain at home we might as well go to what seemed

to be the best place. The night was dark and served our purpose well. My carbine lay in the bottom of the canoe. We did not intend to use it, but I had long ago learned not to go far in the woods without a gun, if only to summon aid in case of accident.

Bert held the canoe stationary by thrusting a paddle into the sand of a little beach that ran under a steep bank. By the aid of the jack through the clear water we could see many fresh moose tracks of all sizes on the sandy bottom. Undoubtedly it was the end of a game trail.

It seemed a good place to try our luck. Nimrod covered the jack and got out his elaborately painted horn of birch-bark and let off a long call. Bert nodded approval. It had the right sound. We were not surprised nor disappointed that it brought no response. These things take time. Nearly an hour passed. It seemed a whole night, every moment crowded with nervous listening. The unimaginative persons we are told, miss much of the joys of anticipation; they also miss many wild visions of

impossibilities that they can well do without.

After the fourth call came an *answer*. It was muffled and indeterminate. Bert and Nimrod signalled that it could hardly be anything else but a bull. Then some distance off we heard a moose dialogue, a low call, an answering bull grunt, then another grunt still farther away. Then, much nearer, the challenging call of one bull to another. It was answered far away: then silence.

I was greatly stirred by this woodland duet, but Nimrod and Bert exchanged puzzled shrugs. Something seemed not orthodox.

Again we heard the challenging call of the bull and again the answer, much closer. Perhaps it was to be our rare privilege to see two bulls fighting for the lady's foot or heart.

The intense listening and excitement was so great that when the report of a gun thundered out, I almost jumped out of the canoe. If the last trump had sounded I could not have been more startled. We knew of no other party in that

region. A second shot made the first seem less uncanny and enabled us to trace the direction from whence it came. There was a tongue of higher land that jutted into Big Dam Lake. We were on one side of it and across this mile strip came a third shot.

"It must be the *Tevi!* They came out after all," exclaimed Nimrod, even forgetting to whisper.

Our feelings were not entirely guestly for the moment. That either Sally or Bobbie would kill a moose in that treacherous way, and that in close season, made it necessary for us to reconstruct our ideas of them, and was sadly depressing. We could not accuse them of deliberately endangering our lives by shooting in the dark so close to us, for they did not know that we had taken their territory; but it was strange that they should come out that night after all their refusals to do so. Altogether, we felt uncomfortable. For the first time we had struck grit in our friendship's cake.

Nimrod had the jack light trained

upon the shore eagerly scanning every foot.

"By George, get out of this—*quick*." He whispered shrilly to Bert.

I seemed to hear a thudding of hooves and a snort, and then saw coming along the trail out of the gloom into the bar of light, a maddened staggering creature that waved its blades of horn like chiffon on the wind.

It was then that Bert broke his paddle in his haste to pull it from the sand and nearly dumped us all in the water in the path of that onstriding giant.

"Put a bullet into him, before he charges us," hissed Bert as I quickly passed him the remaining paddle from the bow. I grabbed the gun, but hesitated. I did not want to kill the Tevi's moose, or any moose then, though it did seem a difficult place. That wounded bull was now just above us on the bank. Infuriated with pain and anger he thrashed about only waiting to make sure of the exact position of his enemy, represented by that maddening light

The next instant the great black bulk charged at us off the high bank and crashed into the water alongside, with a shower of spray that nearly capsized us and put out the jack with the jar. The momentum sent our canoe rocking away from the struggling creature. Bert did wonderful work with the paddle, and not an instant too soon, for one thrash of those horns that were churning the water to foam, would have been enough to spill us and then we would have been in a serious plight. Now I was indeed ready to use the gun. It was no time to dally. But soon it was evident that I need not use it. That awful jump, I doubt if he knew what he was doing, had been the great creature's final throw at life. Weaker grew his struggles; and the waning moon that night, rising above the black pine hills shone, a huge red disc, upon a pair of antlers that rose from the muddied water almost like the gleaming teeth of some nether world demon.

Quickly we paddled to meet the Tevi and to tell them the sequel of their moose. How wounded and

seeking to get away, it had taken a familiar runway which had brought it to us—to another of those hateful gleaming eyes at which it had charged with all its failing strength. We did not expect to be believed, but the tracks in the morning would show. Only why could they not have waited until the law was off. It was only a few days more.

We had nearly entered the little cove where we had located the shooting, when a canoe almost slipped past us. The two figures in it were paddling fast. It was evidently *not* the Tevi.

"Good evening," Nimrod challenged; "Are you looking for your moose? It is around the point."

The men rested their paddles an instant.

"All right, *savez*," responded a gruff voice, at which Bert said, "Hello, Bill, when did you come from Trollaks?"

To this came an extraordinary answer, "Humph, I suppose you think it smart to talk, go ahead. Who cares. I'll swear it was you."

"Who is it?" I asked.

"Oh, Bill's a head-hunter for Beans' taxidermist shop."

In my relief that the Tevi had not, in or out of season, decoyed and butchered that great beautiful live thing, I called out mischievously, knowing it would be no easy task to pull that hundreds of pounds out of the water.

"You will find him stuck fast in the mud, and it serves you right for murdering him that way out of season."

I think, but am not sure that this feminine thrust was responded to by a masculine swear, but our canoes were rapidly separating.

Bobbie never has recovered from the shock of our asking him to believe that "pipe-dream" of the moose that charged the jack-light. Sally, more open minded, or more politic, gave a good imitation of belief. As Crêche had to be sent back to Te-vis-ca-bing for another tent, luckily there, we must still delay a day or two in that region, and, eager to prove our case, we conducted the Tevi to the scene of the tragedy.

But alas for the cause of truth! Our proofs had been trampled on by the head-hunters in getting out their trophy, and the subject of jumping moose, or acrobatic moose, almost moose at all, diplomatically ceased to be a matter for camp conversation.

XVII.

"JEST TRAVELLING" IN WATER COUNTRY—CRÊCHE'S ULTIMATUM

ONCE in the Rockies a Mountaineer met our packtrain, and, after the customary salutation, "How dy," propounded this enigmatical question.

"Quite an outfit. Are you goin' somewheres, or only jest travellin'?" Nimrod debated this distinction and finally left the decision to his questioner.

"We are going into the mountains, hunting."

"Oh I see. *Jest travellin'*. Thought

perhaps you might be out on business, prospecting or something. Well, so long."

A thin veil of gloom hung over the camp two mornings later and it was not due to the chilly fact that we had breakfasted by candle light at five o'clock. We were to move camp that day to the spot on Beaver Lake that Bobbie and George had decided was the very heart of moose country. The Tevi, as well as Nimrod and I, had had much experience "jest travellin'" in horse country. We knew its limitations and its possibilities in the matter of transportation of luggage. But not so in canoe country. And unfortunately, as it proved, Bobbie had become imbued with the idea that one could transport a very liberal allowance of 'duffel,' per canoes.

"A big canoe holds a thousand pounds, you know, and if one likes a few extra things, it only means running the portage another time," he said comfortably. This speech was called forth by a suggestion from George that it would be well

to wait another day and divide the moving, as we did when establishing Camp Muscalonge. This meant delay and we had been delayed enough already. Iron necessity would call his guests away in another week. Bobbie pointed out that the first moving had been done in "two easy days, and that therefore one hard day would do the other? Wouldn't it?'

George thus challenged, did not stand his ground. He merely remarked with a shrug, "You are the boss." So what happened really was his fault, for he knew such a move to be an impossibility, and should have said so.

The outdoor man, born and reared in the open, will take chances any time rather than incur the possibility of being thought cowardly. Is it a sort of fatalistic attitude that springs from dealing with forces stronger than themselves, stronger in every way, save for the unconquerable will that makes humans divine?

So we breakfasted before daylight, and tried not to notice the air

of dogged reserve with which each man worked. He knew it could not be done but he was willing to try, since that was what he had been engaged for, and leave the issue to fate. Crêche, as usual the only talkative one, expressed his mixed ideas in equally mixed dialect.

"Shure Mr. Tevis, mon. We'll try ze thrick. Zere is no buck on ze Ottawa can carry more zan Crêche. *Grâce â Dieu, je suis fort comme le boeuf.* Crêche will show you what a man can do to-day. I sucked strength in wif my movver's milk, and her movver was an Indian princess who——"

At this point the Cook threw at him an empty water pail.

"Here fill that, and work your legs instead of your jaw for a while."

There were no idle hands that morning, and by ten o'clock we actually had gotten packed up and all the stuff moved across the Lake to the first portage, which was about a mile long.

It was there that Bobbie got his first shock. Two of the canoes had made a *second* trip. He had no

idea that our belongings would not go into the five canoes. Sally at the risk of being mobbed, suggested that "like dough they seemed to swell when needed."

"But after all, even if we do have too much for the canoes, it is not very serious. It will not take long to run back on the water as we must do on the carrys," said our host.

It seemed easy to me—then. Bert overhearing this remark smiled grimly, swung a seventy-five pound top pack onto his hundred-pound back pack and trotted along the trail. One by one, the men took up their burdens adjusted tump lines and disappeared. There was no hurry for us. Bobbie estimated that each man would have run the trail three times.

Lading ourselves with guns, fishing tackle, cameras, all the goodly paraphernalia of sport, we four filed along a trail which showed the hobnailed prints of George and Arthur, the pointed shape of Bert's American gear, the oblong outline of Crêche's moccasined foot, and the shapeless tracks of the Cook, who had encased

his "left walker wounded in the war" and now tortured by rheumatism, in wrappings of gunny sack.

It was a jewelled morning. Deliberately we cast away carking care and gave our senses to the exquisite bit of the world about us. The sunlight, brilliant and calm, dappled through a grove of spruce and black birch in great splotches of yellow, seeking out the dainty arbutus that spread its dark serrated leaves in modest profusion, and flashing into greater beauty the strange shape and colours of the pitcher plant, the orchid of the North.

The grove ended at the bank of a stream which we crossed on stepping stones and forthwith entered a vast clearing on which the sun beamed its full noon rays unchecked. A generation ago, it too had nourished a proud forest of primeval growth, but the lumberman's axe had smitten it away and the earth had long since donned its resignation garb of waving feathery grasses, scarlet and blue-fruited bushes, and wide stretches of the free-flowering

bracken, now in autumn browns and sun-dried sweetness.

In the tempting fragrance and warmth of this we dropped to rest. The men had all passed us on the return trip and now coming toward us was a big canoe, bottom side up. The trim athletic grey legs under it belonged to Bert. It passed without comment. Another canoe equally large, came walking toward us on sturdy brown legs in hobnailed boots. It also passed in silence. Another smaller canoe appeared on somewhat bowed legs and moccasined feet. It did not silently pass. When it got within hearing distance, it began to puff and blow and finally swung off its base altogether and descended to the ground, revealing Crêche, who mopped his dripping brow.

"You'll do well to rest, since ye's can. *Le soleil brûle comme tous. Il féra une bonne omelette de moi!*"

"Can all the stuff be brought in another trip?" asked the host.

Crêche swung the canoe into travelling position, carefully shifted it to the proper balance, and then

flung out carelessly. "Shure! one more——or t'ree——or five;" and went his way whistling a chanson "*A la très bonne, ă la très belle*" which stopped as soon as he was out of sight.

At one o'clock we and our chattels were occupying plenty of space at the head of a small stream that led into Big Dam Lake. The men had run that portage *five* times each; twelve miles already, half of it heavily laden. Breakfast, eight hours ago, long since had been forgotten. They must have food at least. We were less than half way and the "long portage" yet to come. The muscles and veins on the men's necks stood out like whipcords and their hands trembled from strain and fatigue. But they denied being tired, only "hot and hungry."

I have frequently observed that the voyageur is ashamed to be tired, but proud of being hungry. It was four miles on Big Dam Lake.

"The canoeing would be a rest," quoth Bobbie.

It was not a pleasant four miles. Our canoe was undeniably top-heavy.

"It's all right," Bert reassured, "We can keep it balanced when we get in."

By dangerously overloading the canoes we managed to get all the luggage aboard save "a few things we did not need immediately and could be sent for to-morrow."

A jeering friend in a dream city, called New York, had presented me with two pairs of "water wings." I may briefly state for the benefit of those who have never made the acquaintance of these little objects, that they are irregular-shaped bags, like the map of North and South America, joined by the Isthmus of Panama. When inflated and placed, the Isthmus across the body and the Americas under the arms of a person in the water, they are supposed to keep said person from sinking. When I watched Sally crawl into her canoe while three men held it from capsizing and gazed awesomely at the subsequent "trimming" and adjusting of its bulging contents to make it ride even, I forthwith handed her a pair of aniline-pink water wings as a token of my affection. She was inclined

to be trivial about my gift until she saw a similar pair soaking in the water beside me.

I mention this incident as it occasioned the only shaft of amusement that pierced the gloom slowly deepening upon the men. It was like the odour of a bear's skull that Clifford had killed the winter before and hung on a stick near the trail, the pervasiveness of which had fraught the lunch hour with unpleasant suggestion.

A horse with a load beyond its capacity bucks it off or lies down. A top-heavy canoe is like an unbroken mustang. It follows no laws. It turns and whirls and does queer lurches that give one the unwelcome feelings of a sudden up-shooting elevator, and ours was withal so cranky and unmanageable that only Bert's expert paddling again and again, when we were almost over, saved our possessions at least from a watery annihilation. Of course *I* was quite safe for had I not my water wings? Ready for immediate service, they trailed in the water, two fat pink balloons, and I have no

doubt that they averted disaster, like the possession of an accident policy; for witness the misfortune of the Cook, minus the "W. W." His canoe struck a snag, turned turtle with a facility that was shameless and deposited that rheumatic veteran in three feet of water with his cooking utensils and food. Therefore, we were all concerned. Lucky it was for us that it happened on a sandy bar and that the food was nearly all in tins and waterproof bags.

This mishap did not tend to disseminate ease in the overcharged atmosphere of the party. As we reached the landing of the long portage a horrible odour greeted us beside which the bear's skull had been as child's play. Pestilence and death seemed abroad. Nimrod quickly found the cause—another pleasantry of Clifford's. As wolves are the enemies of game, it was his province as game warden to exterminate them. A grey wolf had been caught in a trap, and in order to make him a warning for his fellows to quit the neighbourhood, Clifford

had suspended his victim from the branch of a tree. This was months ago. Few wild animals will go near an unusual object, especially with man taint on it, and there it had remained undisturbed, given over to slow decay and taking its revenge by polluting the air for yards around.

It was to this distressing accompaniment that Bobbie reviewed the situation. It was now four o'clock. By the most cheerful reckoning we could not hope to reach the new camp ground before ten and it grew dark by seven. To be sure there ought to be a moon and "the boys would have to come back the next day anyway and could gather up what things we lost in the darkness." Bobbie did not want his guests to suffer another day's delay in tiresome transit, since their time was limited. To camp there was impossible, the wolf claimed it all. Therefore he decided to push on.

Again another pile was left to be "brought to-morrow" and he judged that three trips apiece would take the necessities. Even that would make twelve miles more for each.

The burden of possessions weighed heavily upon us. I thought of Bert's story of the divided pocket-handkerchief and felt that one would be courageous to keep even the half with the hole in it. The hole would have been burden enough.

The long portage trail was rough, hilly and boggy and obstructed by fallen trees, but Sally and I hurried along to "get away from the dead wolf," we *said*. I dare say we felt alike. Not inheriting the blood and traditions of Indian priests, we did not enjoy the idea of human sacrifice, nor care to watch the efforts of our guides with those ungodly packs. Several times we had found it expedient to rest, light though our pocket-handkerchiefs were, and when we reached the next water, the sun was waning, somewhat earlier than usual, as it was beginning to *snow*.

"The snow will make good tracking" we said, trying to be cheerful. This trail end was an impossible place even for a one-night camp. It was cut through a dense grove of jack pines and down timber. There was not even a shore. The steep

clay bank was fringed with alders and dropped abruptly into the water.

"We cannot stay here, that is sure," puffed Bobbie after he had thrown down a pack that was too heavy for him and gotten his breath a little, though he was still purple. Nimrod now came staggering up, pale and exhausted, with my bundle of bedding. I was seriously alarmed for him as he rested the pack on a stump and thus let it slip to the ground.

Sally surveyed the two heroes and remarked that it might be well to remember that we were there for pleasure and not to kill ourselves, whereupon Bobbie voiced his growing irritation. He was not angry with Sally——perhaps it is the duty of wives, now and then to open the husbandly safety valve, even though they catch some of the steam—— but he was a man accustomed to successfully carrying through big enterprises and this little muddle was galling.

"I want you not to talk nonsense, Sally. We are going on I say. I

gave George, as spokesman of the boys, an opportunity to back out last night. He knew that it could not be done and did not say so. Now they can take their medicine."

"But——"

"This is no time for 'buts,'" he called as he started back on the trail, limping sadly.

"Bobbie, *Bobbie*, you will hurt yourself. Come back!"

Too late, the irate Bobbie disappeared and Nimrod followed, staying only long enough to light a fire for us. It had to be a tiny fire in the trail, as there was not a foot's space clear from logs and trees; and Sally and I were left to await developments.

It seemed a long time, we were hungry and cold and depressed with a sense of foreboding. At last the Cook appeared, *empty-handed*. He limped along slowly and sat down on a log with his back to us. He said never a word, but the fact that he had "struck" was apparent in every line of him.

Next came Arthur. He flung his pack upon the ground and *sat upon it*.

Bert, immediately behind him, slipped his huge pack off on a log and slowly straightened himself to an upright position. He slid down the steep bank and into a canoe where he could surreptitiously bathe his head.

Each had the air of doing nothing more, no matter what happened. We all sat like graven images, so motionless and quiet that a weasel, shyest of creatures, actually played about among us. It darted over Sally's skirt, and getting bolder, over my foot. It sniffed the straps of the roll under Arthur and ate some bread crumbs that had tumbled out of the Cook's pocket when he had put on his coat.

Nimrod and Bobbie, arriving together, at last broke the spell. Puffing and panting, purple and white they dropped their packs. Certainly neither had ever carried such loads before, but they wanted to show those men——that it was not such a task. Silently they stood and read the message of silence that was presented there in the snowy woods.

Then Nimrod started to chop

WE ALL SAT LIKE GRAVEN IMAGES

some wood for the fire that sadly needed replenishing, though no one had offered to lift an axe.

Bobbie went from red to white with anger. He opened his mouth to speak and shut it again tight. It was unthinkable that these men would leave us stranded here in the woods and with women in the party too, and yet that ugly sullen silence was ominous.

Fortunately, our mountebank of a camp boy now came along puffing vociferously, like an engine blowing off steam. As usual he was preparing a dramatic entrance. Down came the pack with a great flourish.

"Zere! Zat is ze last ounce that goes on Nat Crêche's back to-night. Not if you was ze Gabriel Angel or ze devil himself! Zere's man's work and zere is horse's work. I'll be no mule for any body. I'll give you a day's work, yes and two days' work but I won't be a pack horse, not if I know it. I'll *hit the trail first!* And the boys are with me——"

One by one they nodded. There it was, out——*mutiny*. Our host's

face was a study. How he would have liked to tell them what he thought about it, but it seemed wiser not. George had come up during Nate's tirade.

"Are *you* in this conspiracy too?" Bobbie asked of him, in true *et-tu-Brute* style. George shrugged his shoulders shamefacedly.

"We cannot possibly stay in this trail and there is not room to put up a tent," said Bobbie severely as though it was entirely George's fault, and perhaps it was. "It is snowing and the ladies *must* have some shelter; and I insist that they get it."

"We stay right *here*, or Nate Crêche does any way, and helps himself to grub too—I don't care who says what——"

"Shut up you empty-headed——" but I will spare you Bobbie's remarks so long pent up. He stopped shortly.

Swearing at them was no way to treat men whose self-restraint was worn thin by fatigue and rebellion; besides Bobbie was genuinely sorry for them and for himself

and for the whole predicament, still he could not give in.

George's mental processes were slow, but sound. He now made speech, his drawl more pronounced than usual, and to our infinite relief pointed a way by which our host could retreat with dignity.

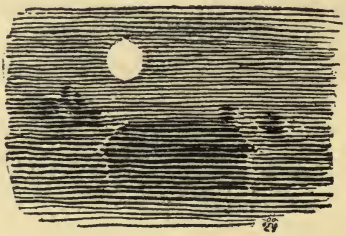
"If I remember rightly, Clifford has a winter shack somewheres on this lake. He told me how to find it. It might do for the ladies."

"Very well, get the lantern and we will hunt for it. Meanwhile boys, Bobbie added diplomatically, "you all better help the Cook find some food."

Hot soup has palliated many a threatening situation, both domestic and national, and it served its peaceful mission that night. The danger of the abrupt termination of our pleasure party was averted, although Crêche, who could not be verbally suppressed when excited, said enough in his spasmodic mutterings to make it clear that the acid of rebellion had almost destroyed the sense of justice and it would not have taken many ill-chosen words on Bobbie's

part to have left him facing the problem of desertion, "ladies or no ladies."

But a wise general knows when to surrender. Bobbie returned with the welcome news that the little log shelter had been "located" and leaving the guides to rest as best they could on the damp, uneven, log-choked ground, we put our bedding in two canoes and, like spirits of the dark, stole across the tiny lake, where a pale and watery moon now shining through the thin snow veil, revealed a ghostly object not wrought by nature. A tiny dirty place it was, hardly room for the four of us on the floor, but we, indifferent to all but the claims of tired muscles, and curtained by the dark, crawled into our sleeping bags and soon at least *some* of us were vying with the wood borers in producing rhythmic noise upon the midnight air.



XVIII.

ONE MOOSE IN PARTICULAR

THOSE early October days at Camp Moose were cold but delightful. We were truly in the very heart of moose country. Tracks were everywhere and we had even heard two cows calling at different times in a little bay not half a mile from camp. Just at dusk the first call came thrilling through the air. It seemed as though some magic power had lifted the veil that shuts out man from the four-foots, and, thus revealed, the strange beauty of it held me breathless.

Although the party was entitled to four moose under the law, we intended to take but one. Bobbie and Sally had each killed a moose the year before, so again to the guest fell the favour of depriving some majestic creature of his life that his head might bear witness of his glory long after his allotted time had passed.

I accepted the office of gun bearer because Bobbie would have felt a mooseless trip to be lacking a necessary savour—and there was a certain wall space in an Eastern country home that had long proclaimed itself an appropriate setting for a "big head." Therefore if fate offered a sufficiently large one I was to play Diana.

In order to assist fate as much as possible, daily we hunted and almost daily saw big game. Twice had Nimrod vindicated the hoodoo horn by calling out a bull moose on gallant errand bent, and after inspection each had been allowed to retire, disappointed and suspicious, saved by a too modest growth of armament.

After my second refusal to "shoot

anyway" I heard Bert sum up the situation to the Cook. He seemed to feel it necessary to explain, for his pride's sake, as we came back so often empty handed.

"She wants a gee socker or none. No picayune headpiece need apply. Mr. Nimrod can sure call 'em out with that fool horn. That fellah to-day was easy. Could most have clubbed him."

One morning the Tevi were going on a still hunt for deer and Nimrod preferred to accompany them. Bert and I were off at daybreak on our quest. We reached a little cranberry bog that pushed out from the usual wooded shore. Wrapped in a white mist we waited and listened for something afoot on the game trail that was near by. Slowly the white mist became thinner, then rosy, and the familiar day-time forms took shape in shadowy blurred garments, that in time gently glided from them. The silence too awoke, performing that subtle change that marks a sleeper's return to consciousness, though there be no motion of the body. The penetrating early

chill departed and full morning welcomed.

Beaching the canoe we started through the dripping bushes, head high, to explore this new region. Bert, examining the plentiful tracks, indicated—one does little talking—that a big moose had gone along a very short time before, was probably in the neighbourhood. With greatest care not to be noisy and with the quickened nerves and breath that always comes when stalking, we came to a tiny lake, embedded in the forest and on which the shadows still lingered. The moose tracks led around it but I stopped to get breath. The excitement of something impending seemed to sadly interfere with it. I *felt* there was moose very near.

I pointed to Bert to give a call with the hoodoo horn. He was not a caller and shook his head. A peremptory nod from me brought a shrug of the shoulder, which meant "very well, since you insist, I will try." He gave two low grunts that a cow sometimes makes when a bull is near.

ACROSS THE TINY LAKE LOOMED A MAGNIFICENT ANIMAL

Bert had not taken the horn from his lips when I saw his body stiffen with attention, and the next instant I heard a low thudding that struck straight to my heart. It could mean but one thing, a heavy animal coming toward us on a run.

Bert handed me the gun quickly. An angry bull moose at close quarters is not the safest form of entertainment. The thudding stopped suddenly and at the same second burst upon me a beautiful vision. Across the tiny lake and above the low willows loomed a magnificent animal, head carried erect proudly he bore two broad blades of conquest. I even seemed to see the blazing glances that shot out from his eyes. A superb creature full of strength and beauty and passion. At his feet was the placid water doubling his stature in its mirror, beyond were the solemn masses of the forest, and now the sun seized that moment to surprise this secluded spot and struck a fitting bar of gold across the monarch's head. One foot uplifted he paused listening for another sound to guide him toward his goal.

He had expected to see his charmer at the lake and was a little puzzled.

"Shoot, he'll go," whispered in my ear.

"Isn't it too far?" I breathed. An impatient shake of the head answered. The moose had turned and stood entirely revealed in the sunlight. He threw up his head perhaps a little suspicious at the silence. "*Quick*, you'll never have another chance like this!"

"Are you sure it is a big head, Bert?" The look of disgust that draped my guide from head to foot caused me to raise the gun. But it wobbled in every direction. I could not hold it up. All strength seemed to have left. Calling pride to the rescue I managed to get it into position, and, even, to aim carefully and fire. As I did so the great creature turned on his back track having decided that it was about time to go. He stopped as the sound of the explosion and then another went booming toward him. The sounds were the only things that did reach him, as the bullets struck far short in the water.

"Quick, there is time for another," but I could not, and the bull slowly disappeared.

With voice still shaking with excitement, I exclaimed, "Bert, I am glad he got away!" at which speech Bert sat limply on a wet hummock, apparently deprived of all ambition.

"Glad he got away." He repeated half to himself. "That does beat all. I've seen 'em miss often enough, but I never seen one glad of it afore."

I had missed my "gee socker" and forfeited the admiration of the camp. But the reward was great—a picture for all time that never fails to thrill me with excitement of that wonderful moment when Nature allowed me to take another lesson from her primer of the woods.

It afforded Bert some consolation that his "party" had missed the "dead sure thing," because the gun sights had been knocked out in travelling: But I knew better. My gun may have been sighted for fifty yards and the distance two hundred, the shots may have been "dead line, all right, but terrible

short, both bullets went in the same hole in the water" and so on. It was not for me to materialise that vision.. "It was a fine head. Finest head as I ever see," and Bert sighed as he savagely rammed the cleaning rod down the barrel of my hapless gun.

"The idea of hunting the critter with a toy like that," was the Cook's comment, looking with disfavour at my 30-30 Winchester carbine.

"Don't blame the gun," I protested, cutting short these camp excuses. "It has brought down big game before and can do it again, if handled right."

"Well, what do you think of that!" was Bobbie's comment; "misses her chance and says she's glad of it. That is the nerviest tale I ever heard. You want a moose, don't you?" he asked suddenly.

"Ye-es—If it is a big one." I was beginning to feel the burden of my failure, popular opinion was against me, and in two days we were leaving.

"Then come with me," said the host. "George knows of a splendid

place on Daly's Lake where a big fellow has been seen."

"Very well, I will be ready in an hour." It was then the middle of the afternoon. I proceeded to acquire as many warm things as possible, including a fur coat and a hot water bag, as sitting in a canoe motionless for hours while it gets colder and colder, is not the most comfortable way of putting in time; and leaving all detachable sentiment with Nimrod for safe keeping, I settled myself in the canoe with a "now or never and you know you want to" attitude of mind that boded ill for any moose with worthy antlers that was unlucky enough to get within range.

The way to Daly's Lake took us past the scene of the morning's experience. Before reëmbarking Bert had made a little fire that I might thaw out. He had carefully scattered the brands as usual when we left; although there seemed small need of it as the woods were soaked from recent rains and melting snow.

Now to my infinite chagrin, we saw that some treacherous spark

had managed to maintain life, had smouldered for hours and then burst forth. There is no crime so black in camp life—short of murder—as "setting the woods on fire." Bert had taken all precaution, but how convince the host of that when the flames were crackling merrily and spreading every moment? Fortunately the mischief had but just begun, and an hour's hard work was sufficient to extinguish every spark beyond the possibility of a revival.

This disgrace coupled with the disappointment already dealt the camp by me added the finishing touch to my present purpose.

Henceforth there was no pity and no sentiment. My soul was no longer open to the beauty of the evening. It may have been beautiful, I only remember that it was cold, and that I sat in the middle of the canoe, gun in lap, alert for a chance to use it, as George propelled us swiftly, silently to a little bay in Daly's Lake that was half choked by bog and rank marsh grass.

The sun had set, but there was plenty of half-light. I scanned the

sky, not to see the twinkling Northern Lights, nor the orange and violet aftermath, but to calculate how much more time one could hope to have light enough to shoot by.

Bobbie took up the hoodoo horn he had borrowed from Nimrod, and made a call. I remember fearing that it was hardly a good enough imitation to summon a moose. It might be more efficacious in driving one way, and I desired above all else that a moose should come and be killed.

It might be an unfair advantage for human intelligence to lure the animal thus by his instinct, but it was the usual method—away with sentiment. Had I not left it behind at the camp?

In fifteen minutes Bobbie gave another call. It shrieked and bellowed over the swale to the ridge beyond—and—was *answered*. This time I was disturbed by no quakes. I gripped the gun—ready. In two minutes we heard the bugle again much closer. We could even hear the crashing of branches. A bull was coming, careless of noise, coming

—coming on the run. It was an indescribable moment. That creature coming—on—on *nearer*—and me waiting to kill him, if I could.

Once the faint noises that told of his progress, stopped And we wondered anxiously if it could have been a bear we had heard. Or perhaps the bull was waiting for another call. But the slashing of bushes and breaking of sticks began again, louder than ever. Then we heard grunts! He was *coming*—closer and closer—awful moments, but I would not let myself think. I simply sat there—grim, tense, ready, until he should burst into the open. When he did, he seemed to fill the whole horizon. I had no need to ask about the great forest on his head which he tossed about like feathers, as up and down in the oozy, log-choked bog he onward strode. Through the swale straight toward us he came halfway, and paused. A tighter grip clutched my heart—*now*. I stood up in the canoe, George and Bobbie strained to hold it steady. I could see him better thus over the marsh grass. Eighty yards, perhaps, I

thought. The deadly muzzle of my gun swung into focus on the great glistening mud-splashed shoulder—he turned his head from us, I remember being glad as I pulled the trigger, that this lessened the chance of a mis-shot hitting the horns——.

A most unholy joy seized me when George cried!

"He's hit! Give him another!"

This is no place for the horrid details which I insist upon forgetting. In a quarter of an hour it was over. I was soaked in mud from waist down, having repeatedly slipped into the bog in my efforts to get to him quickly and put the finishing touch, so that he would not suffer. An overwhelming sense of relief rushed over me—unsportsmanlike, perhaps, but blessed. The icy grip of murderous intent relaxed and I felt once more human.

The last of the half-light had gone now. We could do little more until morning, except to protect the precious head from prowling four-foots and birds of the air. George's vest wrapped around the great square nose was sufficient for the former, as

no wolf, coyote, or fox would go near that human taint on the vest, and my handkerchief tied on the highest horn tip would serve to scare away the latter. Even the fearless *Whiska Jan* would hesitate to approach anything so peculiar.

Thus in the dark we left what an hour before had been one of the most superb animals of the woods, enjoying his birthright of life and power and beauty, and now—a magnificent set of antlers, the finest that had been taken out of that region in years, no longer his, but *mine*—— and a thousand pounds of carrion meat, a too royal banquet for the wolves. Perhaps the scales balanced: each must judge for himself.

I deferred a verdict as we felt our course along the black and silent waterways to camp.

Bobbie's exultation was unalloyed and infectious. His guest had upheld the honour of the camp—we had come there for moose; therefore moose we must get—and had provided the fitting climax to the trip.

Next morning when Bert saw the

SHE LOOKED AT THE FALLEN MONARCH AND SNIFFED IN ALARM

head he appeared to be mightily amused:

"So you got him, after all!"

"Got who?"

"Why that is the fellow you were glad you did not shoot yesterday morning. He was meant for you all right. I told you he was a wonder. There ain't two heads like that in these parts. I noticed that right palm and split ear particular."

My emotions at this information were varied. It was like finding that one had strangled the ghost of one's first love. The previous act of mercy was nullified—engulfed in the present deed.

Also with the morning came the Scientist with calipers and rule, note-book and pencil. The much interesting information "my moose" furnished for the advancement of knowledge has no place in this record of experience and emotion, though it helped to make the scales balance.

Nimrod also discovered, by her autograph of course, that a lady moose had visited this fallen monarch of her realm; perhaps in the moonlight had called gently, had

sniffed, advanced cautiously and sniffed again in surprise—had snorted then, with fear, and wheeling in her path, had fled from the prostrate form that never more would answer to her summons.

For the last time we rose at dawn, as we had done so many times before, breaking ice in the water bucket that stood waiting at the door, when a far away sound held us listening. One is always three-fourths ears in the woods, as one is three-fourths eyes on the plains.

"It is wolves" said Nimrod hurrying into more clothes. They are coming *this* way!

The broken noises were getting louder and I could distinguish several voices in the chorus of yaps and howls.

"It is their hunting cry" Nimrod interpreted excitedly. "They are chasing something—a deer, surely, by the way it travels."

The din was now like a whole menagerie let loose.

"The deer is hard pressed. The wolves are gaining on it. Hear them now!" The language of the wolves was no mystery to Nimrod.

"Why *her*?" I asked.

"Probably a doe, she is not putting up a very good fight. Listen, I believe she is leading them *right into camp!*"

If she did, it would not be the first time we had known a wild animal at the point of death from its enemies, seek protection from the arch enemy, man, and with us the trust had never been betrayed.

The incredible racket of that pack of hunting wolves about to close on its quarry, was blood curdling. They were not a hundred yards from us, when, like the shutting of a door, the hubbub stopped. The wolves had discovered the trick and, not daring to pursue farther, had slunk away, disappointed, vanquished for that time.

Having accomplished her deliverance, the deer took no unnecessary chances with us, but sneaked off in another direction.

We had seen nothing, but to those who had ears and understanding, the whole drama was as legible as a printed book.

With this diploma from our "little

brothers," to testify that although we often slip back into the stone age attitude, we do have, and frequently use, the divine attributes of justice and mercy, we turned our feet once again toward the bricks and mortar, toward the frills of life, desirable and delicious, taxing and enervating.

On an Eastern wall hangs a beautiful moose head with broad palmated antlers and gleaming tips, that like the magician's carpet is capable of transporting us at any time back to the days in the open, when blood ran through the veins, quick and red, when we worked, played, idled and rested with a vigour and a joy that never comes elsewhere.

Perhaps the scales weighed even, after all.

PART IV.

IN NORWAY

XIX.

THE NEW HUNTING OF REINDEER—WHEN I ATE THE CAKE AND HAD IT TOO

THROUGH blood one may come to the light. Nations have too often shown us this imperfect way. Although never an enthusiastic murderer of animals, I, as already confessed, had not been proof against the temptation to secure a trophy "big head"; yet may I claim the grace of moderation in the face of unusual opportunity. Out of nine hundred and eighty-three deer counted in three weeks in the Flat-

tops, nearly all within gunshot, I had taken but one. Of five hundred elk seen in the Jackson's Hole district, one; of eighty-six antelope in the Shoshones, one; of eleven bears in the Rockies, one; of a hundred coyotes, none (for reasons). How the alleged "fantail" and the moose came to join the group, has been duly set forth.

Always but an incident, not the reason, for out-door living, to quote an ancient saying, I had "no further stomach" for killing; and when we started for Reindeer land, I laid my gun at the feet of this modern Nimrod, indeed "a mighty hunter before the Lord" and became a devotee of the New Hunting.

Armed with camera instead of gun, one receives in equal lavish measure the blessings of companionship with woods and waters; one can steal from the animal his every beauty and yet leave him none the poorer. This ideal hunting requires all the skill of the old-fashioned gunner and much ingenuity besides, for an animal can be shot much farther away than photographed.

And thus equipped we hied away to Norway, Nimrod and I, the hunter passion keen for our quarry, the reindeer, the Norway caribou. To wrest from it, if possible, not its life but its manner of life; not its head with its bony processes without, but proofs of the mental processes within.

Norway is a land of bare rocks, bleak wastes, and silent waters. Its charm gains slowly but, like the people, is of enduring quality.

The uninviting uplands of dwarf half-frozen vegetation seem to stretch on to the world's end, and yet the houses are built small-footed and broad-shouldered, as though land were valuable, and of wood where wood is scarce and stone is aggressively abundant. The farm buildings, their thatched roofs well weighted with stones, huddle close to form a bulwark against the winter drifts, and often an extra barrier against the Snow King is carefully up-thrown. The *saeter* that shelters solitary herdsmen of the *rensdyr*, is a habitation merely, the next remove from a cave dwelling, and

the farmers' houses have evolved but little.

Stern as their *hoiffeldene*, sturdy as the little horses they rear, are the people, fearless as the wolverine, and inheriting the silent depths of their gloomy beautiful fiords. They laugh, it is the sunlight on the mountains, yet one does not forget the half-year winter night. They save, niggard Nature makes provident man. Every wisp of hay is garnered and cured as one would herbs, on a frame. The crop from a grass patch no bigger than a city back yard, tucked among the cliffs high in the air, is sent down by means of a hay-wire to the little farm-house, itself clinging to the mountain side with an air that someday it may forget and topple into the deep waiting fiord beneath.

Those quiet fiords! the little coughing steamer that daily bustles through, bearing its human freight from the outside world, like a bumble bee before a brooding storm, only enhances their silence. Between the fiords and stringing them together, gem after gem, run kilos

and kilos of ribbon roads. Here one takes no iron horse, but an open carriage and rough-coated ponies; and one travels at pleasure, the summer is always light, midnight or noon the majestic scenery is unfolded with compelling beauty.

Thus for days Nimrod and I travelled and came to Nystuen, back of which on the uplands we were to hunt the reindeer. We had carefully transported our weapons, two cameras, and saved our ammunition, so that we had several dozen rounds of shots, and we longed to "bag some game." But the inhabitants of Nystuen move slowly and entertain an Oriental attitude toward foreign women.

"Yes, there were reindeer back on the hills, several thousand of them. Yes, we could go to them. Yes, Updal had come back only the day before and knew where they were, but better not go to-day, perhaps to-morrow. Yes, there were ponies to ride, but better wait."

This went on for several days which Nimrod put in, however, sketching a *pulk-buk*, a most moth-

eaten specimen of a tame reindeer, and the harness and *pulk*, a boat shaped sled. I took a ride in this *rensdyr pulk* on the grass, there being no convenient snow-patch, and found it strange, uncomfortable locomotion.

The pulk is drawn by a single thong; the reindeer is guided by another thong, swung in the direction one desires to go. There is nothing between one's low crouching self, and some clicking free-flying hoofs, but training and inherent courtesy. Stories are not lacking, indeed, of angered pulk-deer turning on their drivers, whose safety depended upon the agility with which the pulk could be capsized with the driver inside.

Though absolutely wild, the reindeer herds back of Nystuen are kept track of by a herder and his dog, usually a sharp-nosed canine, wolfish in colour and attributes. Together they spend solitary weeks in the region the herds favour, rendering occasional service to a *simla* (mother doe) protecting her *rens kalv* from a wolverine or a venturesome bear that may have been lured so high

by the hope of a dainty meal. Six weeks the herder daily endeavours to locate the reindeer, seeking his shelter in one of the many *saeters* that dot the hills; then he is relieved by another youth equally hardy and knowing not fear. Periodically some lusty deer give up their lives that man may live the fatter, the meat being used as beef is in America. Delicious we found it, when properly prepared.

Indeed the reindeer is a host in himself for the North Country dwellers. They drive him, they hunt him, they wear him, they eat him and still remains the bloom of his wild inheritance that pervades the spirit of the people, their traditions and their literature.

The Spanish *mañana*, the English to-morrow, the Norwegian—never mind—are synonyms, all mean postpone the evil. There was obviously a hitch; at the end of a week we got no nearer the reindeer herds. Something was preventing. I determined to discover what. Half an hour's work with the interpreter, consisting principally

of silences, divulged the awful secret.

Madam was to accompany her husband, and in all Nystuen, a hamlet of three houses, there was not a side-saddle!

The next morning two buff-coloured stocky animals with roached manes and flowing tails were waiting saddled in the stable yard. Madam had declared she cared not what the animal wore so long as it would carry her. The statement had evidently brought welcome release from responsibility. Gravely, Updal the guide, who was to walk, presented a hand for assistance in mounting. An English jockey-pad about the size of a postage stamp, unfortunately not as adhesive, was perched on a broad flat back, two diminutive stirrups hung from it and the girth was a piece of hemp rope. A snaffle-bit was held in the animal's mouth by a piece of twine and sheer equine amiability. Without comment on either side, I was assisted on to this circus-backed steed thus panoplied for unpathed wastes and gathering up the twine,

of different sizes knotted together, that did duty for reins, started on the long march back into the snow-patched hills, hunting in its own country, the swift-footed, wary reindeer.

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At first we passed clumps of the tasselated dwarf willow, and the straggling ground Juniper displaying its cheery red beads; near the bogs grew the white tufts of the cotton-grass and, in patches, was a favourite reindeer food, *rensblomst*, a short-stemmed white flower shaped like an overgrown buttercup. Then, as one ascended came only an occasional black birch, twisted and feeble as a rickety child with the struggle for life in its harsh home. One of these harboured a hardy field-fare that had nested and brought her brood almost to the flying stage, when our coming threw her into a state of wild excitement. She darted back and forth over our heads uttering a harsh cry and discharging at us several volleys from her natural weapon. Doubtless she had never before seen an unwinged biped giant so unpleasantly near, and though

altogether uncalled for, her courageous resistance must be judged from her own standard. It was a pretty exhibition of mother defence, while the babies in the birch cheeped and cheeped.

They were the last of the breathing things; such a dead country! Its talent of stones and moss wrapped in a serviette of snow, and buried —preserved but unproductive. On and on we pushed for hours. Little pools of melted snow rested in the hollows, the tiny red cups of bugle moss on stiff grey stems nestled against the southern rocky surfaces, which, somewhat chilly stoves, catch and hold what heat there is. It was approved reindeer country. Every moment we scanned the distant slopes for some moving object that could mean but one thing.

The morning wore away, the afternoon was nearly gone. Of course, there was no dark to fear as the night hours approached, but there were other considerations, such as food and rest and a glowing fire, those "chill ancestral spaces" pall in time, especially as the day had been one

long acrobatic endeavour to keep the postage stamp on top of my charger. Once he sneezed and lost his bit, so careless of him, but with grave concern the string was readjusted behind his ears by the string man, who was never far away.

Seven o'clock and still no sign. Updal on a boulder had been looking long toward the west; suddenly he slipped down the east side and motioned for us to dismount noiselessly and anchoring the horses with stones, led an elaborate stalk to the crown of a near hill. On raising our heads over it cautiously, a great sweep of desolation came in view. At first I saw nothing different, then, about a mile off a brown patch like a dried leaf on a sheet began to move zig-zag slowly then swiftly in a straight line and disappeared. It was my first glimpse of reindeer. Over a thousand were in the herd, Updal said, as we hurried forward. They had been feeding and had not become visible until passing over the snow surface and they had disappeared for me where the brown-grey earth swallowed their colour

again. Fortunately, unalarmed they were coming diagonally toward us. I saw them again nearer and they looked like maggots crawling swiftly along.

Another hour of patient progression behind sheltering knolls and boulders, when Updal motioned for still greater care and to get ready to 'shoot.'

The silence of that man-neglected place was broken by a curious low sound, like the noises of stiff paper being crumpled, or of a Katydid chorus muffled to pianissimo; this sank away into the quiet, then began again louder. Updal pulled us still closer into the hollow where we were hidden. The noises stopped again. Quickly he urged us between some boulders and around a little knoll; then a wonderful vision presented itself, a great herd of grey-brown animals with snag-like antlers, suggesting a flooded forest, were grouped between a lakelet and some rock-walled steeps, a family party at home in a most appropriate reindeer drawing-room. Quietly were they feeding, some drinking at a

A REINDEER DRAWING ROOM

grey-eyed pool, a *simla* was nursing her *kalv*, a young white *buk* was scratching his hardening horn with a casual hind foot. Two *nekker* were butting each other in youthful play. We were admitted to the mysteries of their wild life. So fascinated, I almost forgot the hunter's duty, but quickly fired a shot.

The herd was drifting our way and the wind was right, so we waited. At forty yards I fired again and got what proved a fine picture. Still they came. Finally when one huge buck was within twelve feet I snapped again. The click of the camera —always that mischievous click— betrayed me, the buck threw up his head, gave the loud alarm-snort. Every head went up and snorted. The herd wheeled about. Whiff! the paper crackling of their hoofs rippled from end to end as they swayed to the right, to the left and were gone. They did not seem to walk or run, they simply went, with a crash of little clicks that the hooves made when raised.

They were gone; but they had left the memory of their presence

and the unwarmed, unflowered country was desolate no longer. I had seen the life it cherishes and as the spirit of an owner pervades his room though absent, this vast attic of the world seemed a proper setting for those mild-eyed silver-coated creatures, descended from the North Wind.

Carefully we carried our hunting trophies back to Nystuen, an easy matter, several hundred reindeer had but the weight of a sheet of paper; and although antiquities are honourable, one time-worn adage must be cast off, as a *rensdyr* casts his winter coat, for we had managed to "eat the cake and have it too."

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